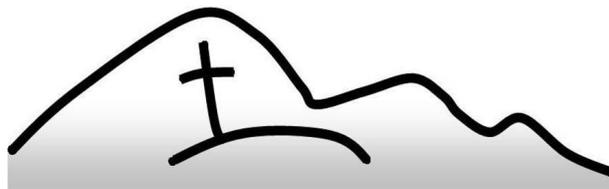


I JESUS L O R D

THE MOUNTAIN CITY MESSENGER



First Christian Church
Mountain City, GA
Building God's Church One Home at a Time

Our Vision

To become a Biblically-functioning family of believers growing:

- Deeper through worship
- Larger through evangelism
- Stronger through discipleship
- Warmer through fellowship
- Broader through ministry

WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER!

Volume 5, Issue 4
 April, 2015

In Christ, we have Life

It is hard to believe that April is already here! We are beginning the month with our Easter celebration and then we will start a new sermon series titled "In Christ." We will be going through Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus for this series.

The first 4 chapters of Ephesians focuses on who we are in Christ while chapters 5 and 6 show us what we need to do in order to become like Christ. In Christ, we have life. In Christ, we have salvation. In Christ, we have security because we have become the adopted children of God thanks to Jesus.

Of course, as children of God, we have to live up to our part of the relationship. We should remember that our purpose is to be obedient to our Heavenly Father as we live here on earth. In every relationship, there are rules to follow in order for it to be healthy. It is no different with God. He has given us the rules and now it is up to us to follow those rules.

As we consider our identity in Christ, let us remember to make every effort to become like Christ in everything we do.

There is life for those who are in Christ.

-Earl Winfrey
 Earl@mkdisciples.org

in CHRIST
 EPHESIANS

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32 ESV)

April 12 - Spiritual Blessings
 April 19 - Alive
 April 26 - One
 May 3 - Guest Speaker
 May 10 - The Heart of Paul
 May 17 - Unity
 May 24 - New Life

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Week of 3/29:

Mon - Isaiah 53
 Tues - Matthew 28:1-10
 Wed - 1 Cor 15:1-11
 Thur - 1 Cor 15:12-34
 Fri - 1 Cor 15:35-49
 Sat - 1 Cor 15:50-58

Week of 4/12:

Mon - Deut 6:20-25
 Tues - Luke 15:11-32
 Wed - Romans 6:1-14
 Thur - Romans 6:15-23
 Fri - Romans 8:1-11
 Sat - Ephesians 2:1-10

Week of 4/26:

Mon - Romans 11:25-36
 Tues - Romans 16:17-27
 Wed - Col 1:24-2:5
 Thur - Colossians 4:2-6
 Fri - 1 Timothy 3:14-16
 Sat - Ephesians 3:1-13

Week of 4/5:

Mon - Acts 18:18-28
 Tues - Acts 19:1-22
 Wed - Acts 19:23-41
 Thur - Acts 20:1-16
 Fri - Acts 20:17-38
 Sat - Ephesians 1

Week of 4/19:

Mon - Psalm 133
 Tues - John 17:20-23
 Wed - Acts 2:42-47
 Thur - Romans 15:1-6
 Fri - Colossians 3:12-17
 Sat - Ephesians 2:11-22

Memory Verse:

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
 (Ephesians 4:32 ESV)

Check us out online:

www.fccmtncty.org

Mailing Address:

PO Box 402
 Mtn Cty GA 30562

Church Office:

706-746-3168

Facebook:

FCC Mountain City

Mkdisciples Study Group

Early Morning Snuggles

Missions we support

Johnson University in Florida

Open Door Libraries

Rio Bravo Ministries

Please keep us informed of any address changes so we can keep our records up to date.

As Christians we have a responsibility to G.R.O.W. every single day!

Give
Rejoice
Obey
Worship

Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." (Matthew 26:38 ESV)

A Prayerless ministry is the undertaker for God's truth and God's Church.

When You Have Nothing Left To Give (Kelsa Turner)

As a hairstylist, I have a business that ebbs and flows. Some weeks I can't get anything done other than work. My house is a mess, we eat out a lot, and all I want to do when I'm done working is sleep. Other weeks things are more steady, I get to play homemaker a little bit. I have time to clean my house (whether I actually do it is another story), I can finally put away the clean laundry that has been sitting in baskets, and I often get to cook not only dinner, but often a home cooked lunch which I take to Luke at work.

Well this has been one of the busy weeks, and I'm the last person to get my newsletter article in. Earl has been waiting patiently on me all week, and this will squeak in at the last minute. Sorry Earl!

It has been one of those weeks that I just want to sleep as soon as I get home. I've used what little brain power I have left to try to think of something to write, but have come up with nothing. I just have nothing left to give.

It's times like this I am reminded how small and frail I am as a human, in contrast to Who God is. He always has more to give. When there's nothing left in me, all I have to do is ask and He gives me a little more, what I need to get through. And without fail, whatever comes out when it's all Him is much better than if I do it in my strength. My writing is better, my days go smoother and I am often kinder to others when there's none of me left.

This also reminds me of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. He had to have been tired from years of going here and there and giving all of himself to preaching and teaching and healing. He knew what faced him, but if there was another way He wanted option B! I wonder if He felt drained, at the end of His rope, worried He wouldn't make it to the cross. So He prayed, He relied on the Father to give him the strength to do what needed to be done, to do what his human body probably couldn't have on its own. When He had nothing left to give, in God's strength He gave it all.

A Clash of Wills (Part 1)

"The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." Proverbs 10:9

Cinderella-everyone knows her story. On the night of the grand ball, Cinderella was cruelly prevented from attending by two selfish stepsisters. Her heart was crushed in disappointment.

She ran to the garden in tears to be alone, only to find her fairy godmother. The wave of a wand and a few magic words transformed Cinderella into a most beautiful princess. She was whisked off to a ball where she met Prince Charming. Of course, it was love at first sight and they lived happily ever after.

Happily ever after is the stuff of which fairy tales are made. Though we wish it were so at times, life is not a fairy tale. God is not a fairy godmother with a magic wand waiting to wish our troubles away. He has plans and purposes far higher than fairy magic. The problem for me, and for other Christians as well, is the clash between two purposes and wills: God's and mine. Many times they are not the same.

In 1984, I experienced a conflict between God's will and plan and my own. We were nearing the end of an unusually busy spring, one that also contained more than its share of pressure. During those months, I was feeling particularly stretched with our five children. They were normal, active, curious children with five different personalities and five different sets of needs and problems. It was what I'd always wanted, and I was grateful to the Lord for each of these five treasures. Still, I was looking forward to graduating from nursery duty.

Then I learned I was pregnant again. I was completely caught off guard by the news. Didn't God know I had all I could handle with five children? Didn't He know I didn't want to go through all this again? I was sick physically, drained mentally, and tired of just thinking about six children.

Devotion taken from "Moments Together for Couples" by Dennis and Barbara Rainey

Ladies Night

This month's Ladies' Night will be April 20 at 6:30pm (Location TBD)
Don't forget to send a special note or gift to your secret sister!!!

2015 Conference Opportunities

Stone-Campbell Journal Conference - April 10-11 (Indianapolis, IN)
www.stone-campbelljournal.com/conferences-events/2015-stone-campbell-journal-conference/

NACC-June 23rd-26th Cincinnati, OH (www.gotonacc.org)

"You are not persecuted if people criticize your favorite celebrity Christian" - Jon Weatherly

Who Should We Follow? (Earl Winfrey)

"[10] I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. [11] For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. [12] What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." [13] Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? [14] I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, [15] so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name." (1 Corinthians 1:10-15 ESV)

The above passage of scripture was part of the base text that I used for my final research paper in the last class for my MDIV at Cincinnati Christian University. I wrote about Paul's doctrine of unity and how we can learn to apply it in today's context. If you are having trouble sleeping at night, I can send you a copy of my paper (21 pages long) and you will sleep well! Here is an excerpt from my paper that I would like to use for this article:

This text has been interpreted with a modern application in mind. For many scholars, this has been a proof text to justify the condemnation of denominations among churches. Those scholars use modern denominations as an example of what Paul is speaking out against, but if that example is to be used, a few qualifiers must be present: First of all, there needs to be an understanding that just because a person belongs to a denomination, that does not mean he agrees 100% with that denomination. Some churches have been given a denominational name although they function as a church in unity with other denominations. Second, a denomination should not be viewed as separate from the universal church unless it has that designation from within. Third, denominations usually show doctrinal and practical differences whereas the passage does not indicate that was going on. It would be comparing apples to oranges. The denominational tragedy was not being addressed by the Apostle Paul. They were still one church in doctrine and practice. This must be an internal attitude that caused the differences. And that internal attitude is a failure to understand the nature of the church. The church was not a collection of churches who worshipped the same God. They were one body with many different parts functioning as one church. And that body was not just in Corinth, that body was spread out all over the Mediterranean World.

The issue at hand was the fact that the Corinthians were following individual leaders rather than God alone. In the first century Jewish culture, once a student finds a Rabbi to follow, they do not change Rabbis. This practice was carried into the church so those who learned under Paul refused to follow the teachings of Apollos even though they were teaching the exact same doctrine that came from God. They failed to understand that the human agent in the teaching process was temporary while God's Word remained forever.

Today, there are many people in the church who claim loyalty to a certain preacher, teacher, elder, professor, author, church tradition, denomination, magazine, set of commentaries, set of class notes, etc, while neglecting the one true source of all authority in life, the Bible. The day we fail to realize that God's Word trumps all other teaching is the day we cease to function as agents for the truth. Who should we follow? We should follow the ones who point us to God's Word for the answers. As His church, our responsibility is to stay faithful to God's Word no matter who is leading us. The man standing behind the pulpit may change, but God's Word remains forever!

A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE TWELVE:

By Mark Moore

Simon (whom he named Peter) – Peter is mentioned first in every list. In the concordance, his name is mentioned about three times more than any other apostle, even John. The word Peter means "rock." Likewise, Cephas is the Aramaic word for "rock". He is clearly the most dominant apostle — not necessarily because the others respected him so much, but because he spoke loudly, quickly, and sometimes brilliantly. Here is a summary of some of the prominent events in Peter's life:

1. Walked on water, Mt. 14:28, 29.
2. Good confession of Christ, Mt. 16:16.
3. Jesus said that Peter's confession was the rock on which the church would be built, Mt. 16:18.
4. Jesus gave Peter the keys to the kingdom, Mt. 16:19.
5. When Peter rebuked Jesus for wanting to go to Jerusalem, Jesus said, "Get behind me Satan" Mt. 16:22
6. It was Peter who asked Jesus "How often shall my brother sin against me and I still forgive?" "70 X 7" came back His reply, Mt. 18:21.
7. When Jesus promised a reward to all who leave everything to follow Him, Peter was bold enough to ask, "Then what shall be our reward?" Mt. 19:27.
8. He swore that he would not deny Jesus, Mt. 26:33-40.
9. He denied Jesus three times before the cock crowed twice, Mt. 26:58-75.
10. It was Peter who brought attention to the withered fig tree that Jesus had cursed, Mk. 11:21.
11. Of the three sleeping apostles in Gethsemane, it was Peter whom Jesus addressed, Mk. 14:37.
12. When the woman with the flow of blood touched Jesus' garment and He asked, "Who touched me?" Peter said, "Lord, the multitudes are pressing on you." Lk. 8:45
13. Peter asked, "Lord, are you addressing this parable to us or to everyone?" Lk. 12:41.
14. When the 5,000 left and Jesus asked if the 12 would leave also, Peter said, "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" John 6:68.
15. Peter tried to refuse Jesus washing his feet, Jn. 13:6-9.
16. He cut off Malchus' ear during Jesus' arrest, Jn. 18:10.
17. He asked Jesus to depart from him during the great catch of fish, Luke 5:8.
18. Jesus confronted Peter after the resurrection with the triple question: "Do you love me." John 21:15-21
19. Peter was the spokesman in the choosing of the 12th apostle, Acts 1:13-15.
20. He preached the first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:14ff.
21. Peter confronted Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:3-9.
22. He had special healing power, Acts 5:15.
23. He preached to Cornelius, first Gentile household, Acts 10-11.
24. He was miraculously released from prison, Acts 12:3-18.
25. He spoke at the Jerusalem council, Acts 15:7.

Andrew – Andrew was Peter's brother. He was close to the inner circle (i.e. Peter, James, and John), but not quite there. He was invited in with the inner three in Mk. 13:3. And he apparently held considerable clout with Jesus for Philip brought a group of Greeks to Andrew in order for him to take them to Jesus. But he was always one short of prominence. Andrew holds an important lesson for us. Even though he never made it to the "big time" he performed a valuable ministry. Andrew was constantly bringing people to Jesus. Not only did he bring the Greeks to Jesus (John 12:22), but he also brought the lad with the loaves and fishes (John 6:8). But most important of all he brought to Jesus his own brother . . . Peter (John 1:40). If it had not been for Andrew, we would have never had a Peter.

James – James was the third most prominent apostle behind Peter, and his own brother John. He was a fishing partner with Peter, Andrew, James and John. It is likely that he and Andrew spent a lot of time together watching their more prominent brothers take the limelight. He and John started out as hot-heads. Thus Jesus gave them the nickname "Boenerges" which means, "Sons of Thunder." They demonstrated their fiery character in Luke 9:54 when they asked Jesus to call down fire from heaven on an unreceptive Samaritan village. James has the distinct honor of being the first apostle to die for his testimony for Christ. With his death, the era of the Apostles began to fade and the church looked more and more to the leadership of the elders.

John – He was called the beloved apostle. It is difficult to say who was more prominent, John or Peter. Both before and after the resurrection, they worked side by side. Together they went to prepare the upper room for the Passover meal, Luke 22:8. Together they ran to the tomb to find it empty, John 20:3. They were together in the porch of the temple when they healed the lame man, Acts 3:1-11. And together they stood and defended themselves before the Sanhedrin, Acts 4:13-19. When the church needed their top delegates to examine a Gentile conversion in Samaria, they chose Peter and John. At one point, John would have liked to take prominence. He and James asked for the chief seats in the kingdom. It was John who complained to Jesus about another casting out demons and using Jesus name, Mk. 9:38. But something happened to the heart of John in the presence of Jesus that transformed him from Boenerges to the beloved Apostle. By the time he wrote his gospel, he no longer sought self-glory. From John we learn more about the personal lives of the apostles than any other book. And yet He doesn't mention by name either himself or his brother James. Perhaps this is why, when writing the book of Revelation he was the only Apostle not martyred. He died a natural death while in exile on the isle of Patmos.

Philip – He, like Andrew, had a passion for Christ. He brought others to know him. While Andrew was bringing his brother, Peter; Philip was taking Christ to meet his brother, Bartholomew (Nathanael), Jn 1:43. Perhaps this is why these two men teamed up to bring the Greeks to Christ, John 12:21-22. They were from the same hometown, Capernaum. And yet, Philip had difficulty at times trusting in Christ. It was Philip whom Jesus tested at the feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:5,7). And it was Philip, in John 14:8 who said to Jesus, "Show us the Father." He was the "Needing Nudging" apostle. He had good faith and a tremendous heart, but just needed a little push to get him where he needed to be.

Bartholomew – Also called Nathanael. The only narrative we have about Nathanael is in John 1:45-49. Jesus called him an Israelite with whom there is no guile. Nathanael then uttered the first confession of Christ: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."

Matthew – Also called Levi. He was a hated tax-collector until Jesus called him, Matthew 9:9ff. He gave Jesus a tremendous banquet and invited all his sinner friends. We learn from Matthew a lesson about evangelism. Those who look antagonistic to the gospel may be your best prospects. Matthew was on the other side of the fence as far as religion goes. He was considered a traitor by the Jews. And yet, when he was called, he left immediately. And what is the first thing that he does? He goes and introduces all his "sinner" friends to Jesus. Furthermore, Matthew wrote a gospel that is distinctly Jewish. We learn more from him about the Jewish prophecies and ways than any other writer. Even though he was not allowed in the synagogue, he watched "through the window" with the greatest interest.

Thomas – Also called Didymus. He has received a "bum wrap." We have called him doubting Thomas. And yet all the other apostles also doubted until they saw Jesus bodily. He did, however, require proof. In John 14:5, when Jesus talked about going to the father, Thomas said, "Lord, we know not where you go, so how can we know the way." This introduced Jesus' famous saying, "I am the way and the truth and the life." And Thomas believed that! He was prepared to follow Jesus, even to death. In John 11:16, when Jesus announces His plans to go to Bethany, where the Pharisees wanted to kill him, the other disciples disparaged. A line that we would expect to come from Peter came from the lips of Thomas: "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

James the son of Alphaeus – Also called James the less (Mark 15:40). We have absolutely no information about James other than his name. He never made any keen insights, any dynamic demonstration of faith, or any written scripture. And yet, his name alone commends his character. Known as "the less," either because of stature, age or personality, he was resigned to a subordinate position. And yet, there he served faithfully throughout the entire earthly ministry of Jesus. It is a lesson, that we must serve Christ, not for popularity or gain, but because we are His servants.

Simon the Zealot – Again we have no information about Simon other than his title, "Zealot." This was a political party that opposed Rome's control over Palestine (Josephus Wars IV, 3:9; 5:1-4; 6:3; VII, 8:1), although there is no clearly organized group until about 67-68 A.D. There hatred was fierce for Rome. In fact, much of their opposition was in the form of assassination and guerrilla warfare. It is highly probable that Simon joined Jesus under the belief and hope that Jesus would institute a physical kingdom which would overthrow Rome. He believed in a physical-political Messiah. Yet, somewhere along the line, as he followed Jesus, he learned that love conquered the world, not war. It is an amazing testimony to the power of Christ's love that Simon and Matthew could be brought together. Under normal conditions, Simon would have slit his throat. But they both left their loyalties and submitted to Christ.

Judas the son of James – To distinguish this fine apostle from the traitor, he is always identified as "the other" Judas. He is also known as Lebbaeus and Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:3). He is known for only one comment in John 14:21-24: "But Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world." He, like the other 11, was hoping for a physical/political reign of the Messiah. It was an honest and legitimate question. "Early church tradition tells us that Thaddaeus was tremendously gifted with the power of God to heal the sick. It is said that a certain king of Syria by the name of Adgar was very ill. When he heard about Thaddaeus' power to heal, he called for Thaddaeus to come and heal him. On his way to the king, says the legend, he healed hundreds of people throughout Syria. When he finally reached King Adgar he healed him and presented the gospel, and the king became a Christian. As a result, however, the country was thrown into such chaos that an apostate nephew of the king took Thaddaeus prisoner and martyred him. Thaddaeus' symbol, in old church history books, is a big club, because tradition says he was beaten to death with a club. If any part of this legend is true, it again reveals his courage – faithful to his Lord." John MacArthur Jr. The Master's Men, 1982, p. 71.

Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor – He is mentioned last in all lists of the apostles. In every place where he is mentioned he is identified either as the traitor or as one of the 12. It was unbelievable that one of the 12 would actually become a traitor. No one suspected him. When Jesus told the 12 that one would betray Him, they had as much reason to suspect themselves as they did to suspect Judas (John 13). Ostensibly, he was pure, talented, and faithful. For three years he followed with the other 11, even entrusted with the money bag. Only once do we even get a hint of his greed and avarice – in John 12:4, he objected to Jesus being honored with the oil of spikenard.

Why he chose to betray Jesus is still a mystery. We know this: (1) God foreordained him for this detestable task. (2) He freely chose to do it, even after Jesus showed him all love and gave him all opportunity to repent. (3) He was the only apostle from Judea, Kerioth to be exact. Often Judeans held Galileans in contempt. (4) He may have been disillusioned that Jesus would not fulfill his expectations of a political Messiah. He may have even been trying to force Jesus to make a move.

He committed suicide by hanging himself on a tree. Either the rope or the branch broke and he fell down a precipice, spilling his innards on the way down. Judas is the greatest example of lost opportunity. He had the tremendous privilege of walking three years with Jesus. He was surrounded with the other 11 apostles. Who could ask for more? His hypocrisy fooled even the 10 apostles and was strong enough to harden his heart in the presence of Jesus. Guard your heart! Hypocrisy is imminent, destroying even the best and most talented.

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." - Romans 12:12 (NIV)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - APRIL

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
S.S. - 10am Worship - 11am Wed Meal - 6pm Study - 6:45pm		Every Tuesday at Chick-Fil-A 7am: Men Discipleship Group	1 No Wed Night Services due to Service on Thur	2 Maundy Thursday Service following Meal at 6:00pm	3 Good Friday	4 Easter Egg Hunt 1pm @ Rabun County COC
5 Easter Breakfast 9:30am Program 10:30am Worship 11:00am	6	7 Elders Meeting 6:30pm	8 Elders/Deacons Meeting 5:30pm	9 Men's Night 6:30pm	10 Craft Day at the Church	11
12	13	14 City Council Meeting 6pm (Mountain City)	15 Food Pantry 5:00pm	16	17	18
19	20 Ladies' Night 6:30pm	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 Deadline for the May Newsletter	29	30	May 1-2: Men's Retreat - See Luke for more details	

Don't forget to pray for those churches around us and near our hearts!

- First Christian Church of Franklin, NC
- Rabun County Church of Christ (Tiger, GA)
- Toccoa Christian Church (Toccoa, GA)
- Bethany Christian Church (Bumpass, VA)
- East Win Christian Church (Memphis, TN)
- First Christian Church of Fairburn, GA
- Lilburn Christian Church, GA
- Tucker Christian Church, GA
- Southlake Christian Church (Groveland, FL)
- Christian Church at Deleon Springs, FL
- Tomoka Christian Church (Ormond Beach, FL)
- First Christian Church (Kissimmee, FL)
- Port Orange Christian Church, FL
- First Christian Church of Greenwood, SC

If anyone knows of any churches that need to be added to this list, be sure to let Earl know.

Servers for April:

- Morning Prayer - Mark Mason
- Offering Prayer - Luke Turner
- Server - Kim King
- Communion Meditation - Lee Lantzer
- Communion Preparation - Dukes

Servers for May:

- Morning Prayer - Tom Labbie
- Offering Prayer - Josh Berg
- Server - Kevin Berg
- Communion Meditation - Shawn Albers/Kim King
- Communion Preparation - Tiffany Berg