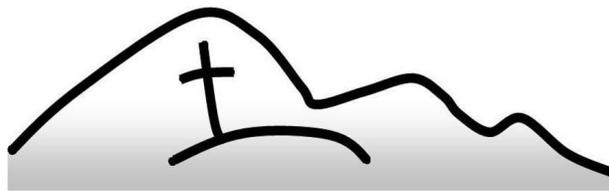


I JESUS L O R D

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 5
May, 2015

Let Us Pray!

Over the last month, we had many reasons for prayer. We began the month with the baptisms of Emmie Albers and Kamryn Mason which of course gave us reason to offer up praises for the victories! Along with the praises, we also have reason for prayer as Emmie and Kamryn grow in the Lord. Let us pray for them!

Another item for prayer is the opportunity I have to help the church in Greenwood SC. I preached for them last week and we are still praying as God leads us through this. Let us continue to pray for both their church and our church here!

This is the month when we celebrate our moms on Mother's Day. Let us pray for the moms in our church!

And finally, we have the crises in Nepal and the riots in Baltimore that need prayer. In Nepal, they need help with rebuilding. In Baltimore, they need spiritual help as we can see evil reigning in the hearts of those who are rioting. No matter how they feel about what happened, rioting is not the answer. Let us pray that the rioters will come to their senses and peace is restored!

-Earl Winfrey
 Earl@mkdisciples.org

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

Week of 5/3:

Mon - 1 Cor 1:4-9
 Tues - 2 Cor 1:3-11
 Wed - Galatians 1:11-24
 Thur - Philippians 1:3-11
 Fri - Colossians 1:3-14
 Sat - Ephesians 3:14-21

Week of 5/17:

Mon - Ezra 9:8-9
 Tues - Acts 5:17-20
 Wed - Romans 6:1-4
 Thur - Romans 12:1-8
 Fri - 2 Cor 5:16-21
 Sat - Ephesians 4:17-32

Week of 5/31:

Mon - John 8:31-38
 Tues - 1 Cor 7:17-24
 Wed - Ephesians 6:5-9
 Thur - Colossians 3:22-25
 Fri - Colossians 4:7-9
 Sat - Philemon

Week of 5/10:

Mon - Psalm 133
 Tues - John 17:20-23
 Wed - Romans 14:1-12
 Thur - Romans 14:13-23
 Fri - Romans 15:1-13
 Sat - Ephesians 4:1-16

Week of 5/24:

Mon - 1 Peter 2:1-12
 Tues - Philippians 3:1-11
 Wed - Phil 3:12-21
 Thur - Philippians 4:4-9
 Fri - 1 Cor 10:1-13
 Sat - Ephesians 5:1-21

Memory Verse:

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."
 (Ephesians 5:1 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.

Are we planting a Flower Garden or an Orange Grove? (Earl Winfrey)

As we continue planting seeds for the spiritual harvest, we need to ask ourselves what we want the field to be. If we want to see immediate results and enjoy the field for a season, we should plant a flower garden. We can even go to the store and find plants that are already blooming, and this would save us time because all we would have to do is dig the hole, drop the plant in, and enjoy the result. Many churches look for the quick fix, the program or group of people who can create the best results in the least amount of time. Some would even go so far as stealing sheep by offering a better deal than the church down the street. Of course, if people are that easy to attract, they will also be that easy to lose if something better comes along. Perhaps planting an orange grove would be better.

An orange grove takes much more work and patience, but the results will last for as long as 100 years. The orange trees often take 4-6 years to bear edible fruit so you have to wait on the results. A flower garden may look good with little effort but those flowers can fade away just as quick. In the church, if you want people who will be committed to staying, you need to put in the time and energy it takes to reach people who won't run at the first sign of something better.

It may take longer to build a church full of orange tree type people, but with much prayer and hard work, a small church can become a great church because the people are committed to serving God where they are instead of expecting the church to serve them.

There is Nothing Like a Mother's Love (Kelsa Turner)

This is the month we celebrate Mothers. What an important and special celebration it is! Mothers bring life into the world, in a very real sense. But not just birthing a child, Mothers bring life into the world by nurturing children, caring for them, praying for them, helping them discover and become who God meant for them to be. I am just on the cusp of Motherhood myself. I'm not quite there, but well on my way. Come late June or early July, I will truly know what it means to be a Mother. I know I will appreciate my Mother in a whole new way. I know I will feel the weight of a Mother's love. I look forward to that day. Even now, getting a taste of it, knowing there is a child growing inside me, experiencing God's gift of taking part in bringing forth life, it is amazing.

Even though I don't yet know what it truly means to be a Mother, I know that Mothers should be cherished. My Mother gave me life and means more to me than words can say. She was there for my first breath, and has been there for me ever since. I can't imagine all the prayers she has said and tears she has shed on my behalf. But I know I would not be the woman I am today without her. She is truly God's first great gift to me.

God gives us many great gifts in our lives, but our Mothers truly are the first. They are the ones who bring us into this world, or take over when the one who did can't or won't be the Mother we need. They are the ones that care for us and are there for us. There is nothing like a Mother's love.

A Clash of Wills (Part 2)

"Do not fear, I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God." Isaiah 41:10

The next two months were hard ones for me. I prayed and I cried and I read Scripture-falling asleep in the middle of the verses. I told God I would obey and follow Him, but it took a long time for my feelings to catch up.

The I heard a story about Glenn Cunningham, a famous track star of the 1930s who overcame a doctor's prediction when he was nine years old that he'd never walk again. This you boy clung to a verse his father had read to him...Isaiah 40:28. I went home, turned to that passage and happened to read on to the next chapter. There my eyes fell on verse 10. I reread it several times, for it encouraged me that God said, "Do not fear, for I am with you." I knew that God had chosen to give me this new child and would also give me the strength and help I needed.

But that wasn't the end of my trials that summer. On July 3, when I was three months pregnant, my heart began racing, just as it had seven years earlier. Dennis rushed me to the hospital- my heart was beating at 200 to 300 beats a minute.

As I lay in the coronary intensive care unit, my main concern was for the child within me. Now that I was excited about the child, was I about to lose it? I prayed simply that God would protect our baby and spare its life and mine. I committed my life into God's hands as I lay there growing weaker and weaker.

The doctors finally slowed my heart by using electric shock treatment. When the nurse told me the baby's heartbeat was strong, I was so relieved I cried for joy.

Six months later, Laura Victoria Rainey was born on a cold January night. She has added joy and smiles to our family and to my life. Dennis and I concluded again that God does know what He's doing.

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

Baby Shower for Kelsa Turner

May 19 at 6:30pm (Thai Paradise in Franklin)

We will be taking a break from Secret Sister for the month of May. If you have any gifts for your current Secret Sister, don't forget to give them to her! We will be picking new Secret Sisters in June.

2015 Conference Opportunities

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

"The greatest enemy of great is good." - Jimmy Johnson

The Apostle Paul's Evangelism Strategies (Earl Winfrey)

While I was in Florida Christian College, I had an assignment in my "Life and Leadership of Paul" class concerning the evangelistic strategies found in Paul's second missionary journey. I decided to share my paper with you:

Evangelism Strategies

The main purpose for the Apostle Paul as well as any other Apostle was the Great Commission. Everything the Apostle Paul did was for building up God's church, and there are plenty of examples in the scriptures that record various activities in which evangelism was the focus. In fact, there are certain strategies that Paul used in evangelism, and those strategies are still useful for the church today.

In the book of Acts, Luke recorded three main missionary journeys of Paul, and in each of these journeys, evangelism was very successful. For the sake of this paper, the focus will be on the second missionary journey which began in Acts 15:36, and ended in Acts 18:22. During this missionary journey, there are many helpful strategies used by Paul for the sake of fulfilling the Great Commission.

The very first strategy in this section of scripture is the fact that Paul was very careful about who he associated with. The dispute between Barnabas and Paul recorded in Acts 15 showed the view of Paul when it comes to fellow workers on his team. For whatever reason, John Mark deserted Paul and Barnabas during the first missionary journey, and Paul was not going to allow the chance of that happening again. Not only that, but apparently, Paul needed some convincing that John Mark had settled the issue, and they just did not have the time to find that out at this point.

Barnabas and Paul parting ways turned out to be a good thing because they were able to cover twice as much ground, but the lesson to learn here from an evangelistic strategy point of view is the fact that Paul knew who he could work with, and he also knew who he could not trust. When working with other people, you have to be careful about who you have on your team. If a team member is not sold out to the group, the team could suffer. Not everyone is equipped to do every good work, so time must be taken to select the best workers for the mission at hand.

When Paul arrived in Derbe, he recruited a worker who had a Greek father. Timothy represented the ideal worker for the mission Paul was on because he was literally a multicultural minister, just like Paul. Timothy's mom was a Jew, so he had the background and teachings of the Law of Moses, but he also knew of the culture Paul was trying to reach. Timothy and Paul made a good match because they were both well educated in the Jewish and Gentile cultures, and their mission was to both the Jews and the Gentiles at this point of the missionary journey.

In Acts 16:6-10, there is a record of a vision Paul had of a Macedonian man begging for help. Macedonia was not in the plans for the missionary journey, but Paul was aware of the Spirit's prompting, so he decided to change their plans, and visit Macedonia. The strategy for evangelism is often changed after being implemented because of the fact that God may need something else to be accomplished. A good minister will see the need being presented, and will be flexible enough to change the focus or direction of the mission in order to fulfill God's specific calling to the situation at hand.

(Continued on page 7...)

Beyond the Identity Crisis (Sara Lantzer)

Notice~ If you have not seen the movie Beyond The Mask, some of this information may spoil it for you. Go watch it first, and then come back and read the article to your heart's content!

Easter is about names and relationships. Our names affect our relationships. Names that don't match actions make doubtful relationships.

Once upon a time, the relationship between God and humans was true. They could talk together, they could walk together, they could just *be* together. God gave an identity to each & every human: Image Bearer, a.k.a. ("also known as") the ability to resemble. You know how the story goes: those first humans used their free will to mis-place their identity when they chose to resemble something other than the Original, and the relationship between God and each & every human was broken. What God had designed to be used as a tool to build trust and unity had become an opportunity to bring doubt and fighting: the identity was now deadly.

What should the humans do now? Could the relationship be fixed? Is there a secret to being able to have an identity that builds true relationships? In order to find out, step into a virtual world, and keep reading.

Once upon another time, in the movie called *Beyond The Mask*, William decides that he is done resembling his boss, who decides to give him death, so he has to fight for his life. Bother! He finds out his identity is deadly. What should he resemble now? A new name, while he continues to plot revenge. Double bother!! He finds out his relationship to Charlotte is doubtful. What should he resemble now?? Well, he wasn't trained as a Vicar, so he is proven a fake and has to fight for his life. Botheration! He finds out *all* his relationships are in crisis. What should he resemble now??? The friend who died to save him, so he sets aside revenge to pursue redemption, while trying to create a name honorable enough to save himself from his past.

Ok, stop the story right there. This is seriously dangerous! An honorable name is not something you can create for yourself: if you are not resembling the Original Image, you will never get it right. And you see, *righteousness* is the secret to having an identity that builds true relationships.

Righteousness is not something to be earned or created. Righteousness is not resembling a human or some other creature. Righteousness is not acting like culture expects. In order to find out what righteousness *is*, step into a Biblical world, and keep reading.

Once upon a Passover, God offered another identity to each & every human. This was the freedom to resemble what was accurate rather than what was deceptive, a.k.a. the trait of Christ's righteousness. God decided the best way to show us how to resemble righteousness was to freely give us redemption through Jesus, Whose name is above every name. He would take our old name away and give us His, so that we could build a true relationship with Him again, just like in the beginning. This is the greatest example of righteousness!

(Continued on the next page...)

"Whether you think you can or think you can't - you are right." - Henry Ford

If, in the Biblical world, Jesus hadn't fought the battle with the greatest Identity Crisis, death, all of us would be as confused and nameless as William in his virtual world: running for his life, with a stolen name that seemed honorable enough, and adventures that keep you on the edge of your seat! If this was where the movie ended, it would be about as beneficial as the American culture of individualism that it sounds like: a.k.a. thrilling and fake and deceptive. But it doesn't end there! You know how the story goes: William learns how neither redemption nor love can ever be earned, so eventually truth is spoken by William, and relationships are eventually becoming trustworthy all around. William's identity crisis becomes a thing that builds unity.

It's a happy ending. And that, believe it or not, is only possible because God offered us an identity at Easter, the name of His Son who fought for a true relationship with humans, based on Christ's righteousness.

The Best and Worst of Times (Part 1)

"And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope." Romans 5:3-4

To begin his classic novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens penned the immortal words: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Was Dickens indulging in an overstated contradiction? Hardly. Life is both sweet and sour...simultaneously. As someone else has said, "Life is like licking honey off a thorn."

Some time ago I was tasting the "sweet savor" of a great year. It was the best of times in that our Family Life Conferences were growing rapidly. At the same time, I was stretched thin by the adversary. Pressure. Attacks. Seemingly insurmountable problems. The worst of times.

Then, as Barbara and I were beginning to get our strength back, we learned she was pregnant...again...and it was not planned, at least not by us. It would mean that, in God's sovereign and loving will, we'd have six children ages 10 and under. The best of times?

Then came that day when God really got our attention. Barbara walked into our bedroom and fell on the bed complaining that her heart was beating too fast. As we sped to the hospital, a hundred thoughts flashed through my mind. Praying for Barbara, I wondered how quickly the doctors would be able to slow her heart. Would I soon be saying good-bye to the woman I loved and be left to raise five children.

Are these the worst of times? No! Not for a Christian. For even death (the selfish, cursed enemy of man) has been "swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54). Even tribulations, the Scriptures tell us, produce hope (Romans 5:3,4).

But I don't like this way of producing hope, I thought as our van rounded the corner to the hospital. We don't need this right now.

Fascinating, isn't it, how quickly our lives can be reduced to a simple faith in God. I've wondered on more than one occasion if God doesn't shake His head at how slow we are to realize we are not in control!

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

(... Continued from page 4)

Another good evangelistic strategy is to keep both eyes open for opportunities to witness. When Paul and his fellow workers went to Philippi, they were arrested. The problem was the fact that Paul had exorcised a slave girl, and her owners were upset because they could no longer make any money off her predictions. After dragging Paul and Silas to the authorities, they accused Paul of causing an uproar in the city by demanding customs that were not suitable for Roman citizens.

Even though the charges were false, Paul remained silent, took the beatings, and he and Silas ended up in jail. Sometimes, evangelism can have a very unfair price, but the point is that the Lord will reward those who are faithful, even if it costs their freedom. That night, a jailer was going to take his own life because of the violent earthquake that shook everyone free. Paul shouted out that they were still there, and the situation turned into an evangelistic opportunity. If the Apostle Paul would have fought back instead of taking the imprisonment, the jailer would not have come to a saving relationship with Christ. Along with that, if Paul and Silas would have ran out after the earthquake happened, they would have lost their opportunity to witness to the jailer through their actions of obedience.

The pace of the missionary journey seems to be steady as Paul and his companions kept moving through the areas in order to reach more people. This strategy helped them accomplish the most good in the short amount of time they had to go on their journey. Delegation is a very effective way to reach more than one area at a time, and this was Paul's specialty.

When they were in Berea, Paul was under the watchful eyes of the faithful followers of the scriptures. The Bereans set the example for every church even today as the people were carefully researching the scriptures on their own in order to make sure the message Paul was preaching was accurate. Even the Apostles were not afraid to give an account for what they taught, so the ministers today should be ready as well. Every member of the congregation has the responsibility to check up on their minister, and the minister must create an environment where this is encouraged.

When Paul arrived in Athens, his strategy for the area changed. A group of philosophers came and challenged Paul while he was reasoning in the Synagogue, and he did not back down. Instead of backing down from the discussion, or sticking to a planned message, Paul decided to meet the philosophers on their level, and reason with them from their point of view. He took the respectful approach, and a lot of people were reached. The main ingredient for his success there was the fact that he did not look down on them because they were not believers. Instead, he understood their position, and was able to use that as a starting point for witnessing. How many times are people today turned away because of somebody running them over with doctrine instead of trying to reach out to them on their level? The church today has a lot to learn about relationships, and evangelism is suffering as a result.

There are many evangelistic strategies in this section of scripture, and if more time was dedicated to studying this subject, there is little doubt there would be many more strategies discovered. The main point is that every mission should be flexible enough to use different strategies to reach the lost. Sometimes it takes a different approach to reach a different group of people, and we should not be afraid to try it.

Between goals and the achievement of those goals lies discipline and consistency.

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - MAY

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 Men's Retreat	2 Men's Retreat
3 Denny Coburn Preaching Fellowship Meal	4	5 Elders Meeting 6:30pm	6 Elders/Deacons Meeting 5:30pm	7	8 Craft Day at the Church	9
10 Mother's Day	11	12 City Council Meeting 6pm (Mountain City)	13	14 Men's Night 6:30pm	15 Women's Retreat	16 Women's Retreat
17	18	19 Baby Shower for Kelsa Turner 6:30pm	20 Food Pantry 5:00pm	21	22	23
24	25	26 Deadline for the June Newsletter	27	28	29	30
31						

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 May:

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

Servers for June:

- Morning Prayer - Lee Lantzer
- Offering Prayer - Mark Mason
- Server - Chris Duke
- Communion Meditation - Luke Turner
- Communion Preparation - Albers