



The Providence Press

Providence Presbyterian Church

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Cultivating Good Habits

Entering a new year is a good time to inventory our habits — the bad ones as well as the good. Greek philosopher Aristotle once opined on this subject: “Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts. We become temperate by doing temperate acts. We become brave by doing brave acts.”

Just so, we will become faithful lovers of God by seriously worshiping and faithfully following the Christian way of life. Attending corporate worship, learning more about Christianity, doing good deeds for others and participating in fellowship events are all good habits. They enhance your life and bring joy to people around you.

It was the conviction of the early church fathers that ‘faith’ naturally seeks understanding. For Christian faith is no sedative for world-weary souls, no satchel full of ready answers to the deepest questions of life. Our faith in Jesus Christ as the loving Lord of all creation does not exist in a vacuum isolated from the everyday joys and tragedies of life. The public world that faith inhabits confronts us with challenges and contradictions, and many answers that sufficed yesterday are no longer compelling today. Thus, out of necessity our faith seeks deeper understanding as our relationship with Christ matures.

A few years ago the media had a field day with the publication of Mother Teresa’s private diary that revealed the pain she endured as a result of feeling God’s absence in her life. To me, this makes her saintly commitment to the “poorest of the poor” more rather than less remarkable, not because she persevered in spite of a crisis of faith, but because she knew that faith is not dependent upon feelings. “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for,” said the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews. “[It is] the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

There are days we can feel God’s presence warming our hearts and there are days when God, for whatever reason, simply seems far from us. This is all part of the human experience; an experience shared by Christ himself. Our task is to search out God’s presence in our lives in both the good and bad times. We are called to examine our faith through the lens of our lives and circumstances as a way of maturing in Christ.

It is my prayer for you that you find peace as your faith asks the difficult questions of life. “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4: 6(b)-7).

In Christ,

-Pastor Drew

Happy New Year ♡ *Happy New Year* ♡ *Happy New Year*

*Thank
You*

Thank You!

Julia and Larry Palmer, Al, Teri, and Tiare Palmer would like to thank everyone for their prayers, and donations of money and clothes during the Tsunami losses in American Samoa. This was a very traumatic experience but having friends for support has made things much easier.

Young At Heart



The YAH January Gathering will be held at Foothills Retirement Community on January 27 at 12:00 noon. Cost of lunch will be \$6.00. Come and join the fellowship and fun. Contact Julia Palmer at 864-630-5030 or julia-palmer@usa.net.



Speaking on behalf of the veterans of Providence Presbyterian Church, we would like to thank the Prayer Shawl Ministry for their much appreciated gift of an afghan to all the veterans in November. I have never been in a church that honored the veterans in any tangible way and this year was very special in its thoughtfulness. The church has been blessed with many veterans and relatives who are veterans spanning many years of service including those currently serving our country in dangerous times. Again, we give thanks to the ladies of the Prayer Shawl Ministry whose time and effort making these gifts is certainly generous and memorable.

Frank J. Van Lenten
CPT US Army, Retired



Women of the Church

Our Morning Circle will be meeting on the 2nd Tuesday morning in January, (1/12), at 10:00 AM at Ellenburg Hall. Betty Sutton will be leading the Circle in Lesson 5, and Julia Palmer will provide the snacks for this meeting.



The Evening Circle will meet on the 2nd Sunday of January, (1/10). For our Evening Circle, Lori Holloway will be leading the study of Lessons 4 and 5 since we did not have a December PW Meeting. Jill Campion will be providing the light supper for the Sunday Evening Circle. We hope to see you there.

Presbyterian Circle Christmas Party

The Presbyterian Women met at Foothills Community Center for our Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 8th. Even though the weather was horrible, we had a good turnout and great food and fellowship. Debbie Sandlin provided a great craft project for us to do. We made Christmas ornament decorations to give for our mission project, Mary's House, a home for abused women and children right here in Easley.

Carolyn Harvill provided devotional cards, each with a letter of the alphabet. And each card had a poem relating to the Christmas season. We all took turns reading these poems. Carolyn also made cute Santa magnets for all of the ladies. At the end of the party, Julia Palmer led us in singing Christmas carols and we all left feeling joyful, with the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts, the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Thank you to Debbie, Carolyn and Julia for all you did to make this a heart-warming experience. And I also want to thank the Foothills Retirement Community Center, and especially Ann Tedder, for allowing us to use their Craft Room for our get-together. And thank you to all the ladies who fixed all the great food dishes. I don't think anyone went home hungry.

Thought For The Day

Two Wolves:

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside of all of us. He said, "my son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all. One is evil: it is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, resentment, lies, false pride, superiority and ego." He continued, "the other is good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith." The grandson thought about this for a few minutes, and then asked his grandfather, "which wolf wins?" The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

Cookies With Santa



We had our Cookies with Santa on Friday, December 4th, in Ellenburg Hall. It was a great success with the children doing crafts, talking with Santa, and listening to him tell stories. To all the wonderful folks who gave of their time and effort to make this a successful event, I thank you. Please read the e-mail below:

Hi Everyone:

The Cookies with Santa was a great success and I wanted to thank all of you who helped make it so wonderful. The children had a great time, with crafts, seeing friends, talking to the man in the red suit, and eating lots of cookies. It was organized pandemonium.

Sherrie, I don't have Michelle's e-mail address, but I wanted you both to know how much I appreciate all that she did, from helping with setting it all up, for all the crafts that she took care of, and for providing help in the form of her elves, Andrew, Cortlin and Jasmin. They were a huge help and even cleaned up afterward.

And please let your dear friend Ada know how much I appreciate her helping too. She jumped right in there and helped with set up, cookies and crafts too.

Shane, thank you for providing all the milk. We still had a few left over, but the children really enjoyed having their own little container.

Lori, thank you for the cookies, for being there and calling all the little ones up to sit on Santa's lap when the time came.

Ranon, I thank you and Angie for being there at the table to check every one of the little people in. You both make great elves.

Jill, thank you for the cookies, for bringing that cute elf, Caroline, with you who jumped in there to help with crafts, and for just being there to help with all the kiddies.

Jessica, thank you and Carson (another cute elf), for the cookies and for helping with the food, and being sure things ran smoothly. Don't know where you find the time for all you do for us.

Dawn Loving, thank you for helping with the craft table. It looked like you and Andrew were having fun showing the little ones how to do those crafts. I appreciate your being there.

Pat, I appreciate all the planning you put into this event, and even though you haven't been feeling well, you came.

If I have left anyone off this email, please call me and let me know. I sure do appreciate all the help from all of you and I want to be sure you all know that.

Hope all of you have a very Merry Christmas.

Thanks again,

Betty Lockaby

COMMITTEE NEWS

FELLOWSHIP



Cookies with Santa was a huge success on Friday, December 4th. We had 45 children there to see Santa, and we had plenty of cookies, milk, and juice. The children really enjoyed the crafts too.

The Progressive Dinner was held on Sunday, December 13th. Even though the weather was foggy and rainy, it was a wonderful experience of fellowship, with 30 or so people attending. We enjoyed soups, cheeses, crackers, and lots of other snacks at Joey and Vicki Ford's home first. Then our caravan went to Lewis and Debbie Clapp's for hors d'oeuvres. From there, we all went to Jessica Traynham's home for dessert.

Wild Wonderful Wednesdays (WWW) will be starting up in soon, so mark your calendars for January 20th.

We have some other events planned for the future but are not firmed up yet, such as the Oyster Roast and the Coffee House Gathering, but we will be providing more information soon for those events. And we would like to have other folks give us some ideas for additional fellowship events. If you would like to serve on the Fellowship Committee, we meet on the 1st Monday of each month at 7 PM at the church. Come join us.

Heyward Lockaby (269-5749).
Fellowship Committee

STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Committee wishes to thank all of you that returned your commitment cards so promptly. The Finance Committee was able to propose a budget to the session in record time. The Finance Committee will provide a copy of the budget as proposed by the session in a congregational meeting early next year.

Shane Metcalf
Al Marshall

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS



It has been all quiet for the last month in the world of Christian Education. Everyone has enjoyed their break from the Wild Wonderful Wednesday programs and have been resting up for when we resume on January 20th. The adults will enjoy a study of Revelations led by Drew, and the elementary kids and youth will pick up with their classes. Please make a note on your calendars to come and join us as we study and fellowship together.

Sunday school classes have been steadily under way. Our women's class is enjoying meeting in the comfort of the CE office! No more little tables and chairs! Curriculum is either in house or on order for the spring semester. If you have a question about a particular class, please give one of us a call and we'll be glad to answer it. Sunday school is the perfect start to a worship-filled Sunday so please come and join one of our classes!

The youth group's most recent activity was their Bake Sale held on the day after Thanksgiving. Sales were a little slow, but our enthusiasm was not! Between sales and donations, the youth raised enough money to sponsor an Angel Tree child and had a great time at Wal-Mart choosing the gifts. A big thank you to all who provided the baked goods and to the parents who helped with this event. There will be another fund-raising event in early spring to earn money for youth activities.

As always, the CE team is dedicated to supporting the education of our whole congregation. If there is something we need to investigate or plan, please let one of us know. We will be starting to think about Vacation Bible School starting with our next meeting. Thank you to everyone who supports the teaching needs of Providence – We couldn't get by without all our volunteers!

Leah Bagwell, Tammy Conwell, Vicki Ford, Jennifer McCalla

From the meeting Monday, for WWW, Drew will be teaching a series on The Book of Revelation for the adults when we pick up in January.

LOOK

Information from Parish Nurse

The Parrish Nurse Planning Team will meet at the home of Julia Palmer on Sunday, January 24 at 5:00 PM to make plans for the wellness activities for the year 2010. Anyone interesting in joining this team is invited to attend.

January is National Glaucoma Awareness Month

What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is an eye disease that causes loss of sight by damaging part of the eye called the optic nerve. The optic nerve sends information from your eyes to your brain. When glaucoma damages your optic nerve, you begin to lose patches of vision. The vision lost usually begins from the side and may damage straight ahead vision. Glaucoma is called "the sneak thief of sight" because people do not notice any of the signs of the disease until they have already lost a significant amount of vision. Once vision is lost, it cannot be restored.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Glaucoma can occur without any signs and symptoms.

People may experience:

- * Blurred Vision
- * Halos around lights
- * Reddening of the eye
- * Severe eye pain
- * Nausea &/or Vomiting

Who is at risk?

Age: the older you are, the greater your risk

Race: African Americans have glaucoma four to five times more often than others and also at a younger age.

Family History: If you have a parent, brother or sister with glaucoma, you are more likely to get glaucoma also.

Medical History: Diabetes, previous eye injuries, or long-term steroid use can increase your risk of glaucoma

How does Glaucoma damage my eyes?

Doctors do not know exactly how Glaucoma damages the Optic nerve. For many people, increased eye pressure seems to play an important role.

Your eye produces a watery fluid that goes into the eye and drains out. When your eye is healthy, the fluid drains through a mesh-like pathway and into the bloodstream. If the fluid can not drain properly, then the excess fluid buildup causes pressure in the eye to increase. This increased eye pressure may damage the optic nerve over time. These nerve fibers in the optic nerve provide sight. Vision is lost when these fibers begin to die.

Doctors are also learning Glaucoma can damage the eye without increased pressure to the optic nerve, but rather with problems of blood flow to the eye.

How is Glaucoma treated?

There is no cure for Glaucoma. However, Glaucoma can usually be treated and controlled using medications, laser surgery, glaucoma surgery or a combination of these treatments.

SERVING THE CHURCH IN JANUARY

Liturgists

January 03	Charlie Jones
January 10	Jessica Traynham
January 17	Brad Rochester
January 24	Tim Everette
January 31	Frank Van Lenten



Acolytes

The January acolytes will be listed in the Sunday bulletin.

Greeters

January 03	Steve & Cathy Gentry, Marian Graham
January 10	Billy & Christina Hall, Miriam Hendricks
January 17	McCall & Stephanie Hemingway, Lori Holloway
January 24	Charlie Jones, Mary Jane Kelly
January 31	Coleman Smith, Heyward Lockaby

Ushers Larry & Kay Seymour, Stephanie Hemingway, Richard Witmer

Infant & Toddler Nursery

January 03	Valerie Urban, Alysen Woodruff
January 10	Tammy Conwell, Nica Carson
January 17	Wanda Whitmer, Teresa Whitmer
January 24	Chris Duke, Sherrie Tootill
January 31	Cindy Everette, Tim Everette

Children's Church

Vicki Ford, Carson Traynham, Jennifer McCalla, Caitlin McCalla,
Dru Duke, Dawn Loving

A winning pattern for the New Year

Some anonymous wise person penned the following directions for living without bringing pain to others or oneself:

“You will never be sorry — for thinking before acting, for hearing before judging, for forgiving your enemies, for being candid and frank, for helping a fallen brother, for being honest in business, for thinking before speaking, for being loyal to God and the church, for standing by your principles, for refusing to participate in gossip, for holding your words when tempted to demean another, for not entertaining impure or hateful thoughts, for sympathizing with the afflicted, for being courteous and kind to all.”

Special dates

- New Year's Day, January 1, 2010
- Epiphany, January 6, 2010
- Baptism of the Lord, January 10, 2010
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 18, 2010
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25, 2010

A New Year's desire

Grant that I may bring no tear to any eye,
when this New Year in time shall end.
Let it be said I've played the friend,
have lived and loved and labored here,
And made of it a happy year.

—Edgar A. Guest

When the new year begins for us

In 46 B.C., Roman emperor Julius Caesar first chose January 1 as the date of the new year. Six hundred years later, the Roman church proclaimed that the new year would henceforth be March 25, the date of the Feast of the Annunciation (when the angel spoke to Mary).

March 25 was the accepted New Year's Day for almost 1,000 years. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII moved it back to January 1.

A statement of faith

A half century ago, Milward Simpson was the governor of Wyoming. He was a Christian who trusted God without question. He and his wife often shared this statement of faith, written by James Dillet Freeman:

The light of God surrounds us,
The love of God enfolds us,
The power of God protects us,
And the presence of God watches over us;
Wherever we are, God is.

Governor Simpson once told of flying in an airplane that developed engine trouble. Instead of giving in to fear, he and his wife held hands and together recited the words they tried to live by. The plane landed safely.

Having a positive statement of faith can be helpful in many situations. Why not create one for yourself and your family — or use the prayerful statement the Simpsons recited.

A prayer for the new year

Eternal God, thank you for bringing us once again to the threshold of a new year. Help us dedicate each day of 2010 to following your will for our lives. Guide us, Lord, in all our decisions and actions, day by day and hour by hour. Help us accomplish all that you desire for us to do, until our mission on earth is finished. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

A special ministry

Last summer, Emma Daniel Gray died in Washington, D.C., at age 95. At the memorial service, Bishop Royce Woods told the congregation about the special ministry Gray practiced every night for 24 years, as she cleaned the Oval Office. She paused behind the president's chair and offered a prayer for blessings, wisdom and safety.

"You couldn't be around her and not know what she believed," Woods said. "She always believed there was a higher power to grab on to that would lift you above any circumstance, and she was always able to do that. She preached her own eulogy by the life that she lived."

Now is the time

We live in troubling times, with wars, poverty, hunger, economic woes, health scares and more. So what now?

Believe this: We Christians will survive the test! Faith, prayer and discipline will bring us victory. Our love for God and the need for worship, Christian education and joyous fellowship will ultimately prevail.

A pastor who worked in a city's poverty-stricken area was asked how his work was going. He answered: "It is a hand-to-mouth existence: God's hand providing for our mouths." So it may be for many churches and people today. But God promises to see us through.

No desperation

Nearly every year, California is plagued with massive wildfires. In October 2007, an unrelenting fire raged through and around Malibu. Many homes and other dwellings quickly became heaps of ashes. The Malibu Presbyterian Church fell prey to the raging flames and unceasing wind.

Those who loved the church stood helpless before the inferno. They remembered the blessing of worshiping God, attending Bible classes, sharing in prayer and experiencing warm Christian fellowship.

A Los Angeles Times reporter found faithful church member Annie Kauffman watching the fire. Although pain was written on her face, Kauffman said, "Losing the building is stunning. To stand and look at all this is a kick in the gut. But because the heart of the church is the people, I don't feel a sense of desperation."

Bible Quiz

In Revelation 22:16, Jesus says: "It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of _____, the bright morning star."

Choose the correct name from the list below:

- A. Isaac
 - B. Jacob
 - C. David
 - D. Solomon
-

Answer in next month's newsletter.

