

A LAMPSTAND FOR MOUNT AIRY

COVENANT REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PASTOR SCOTT WILLET

MAY 2019

Assembling Together

Meeting together is important. Everyone knows that. Most everyone would know the primary proof text that serves to encourage us all—Hebrews 10:25, the exhortation of “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.” But why? What is the value and purpose of coming together for the activities of the church? And why, some might ask, two worship services each Lord’s Day? Why mid-week Bible study? Why Sunday School?

For some, there was a time when that “why” question might never have been asked. If the church doors were open, people just came. But with the busy schedules and, at times, the limited energy that many of us endure, that question of “why come to church” might not have such an easy or satisfactory answer. So people choose to stay home. Some clearly because of their own negligence, but for others, that judgment just isn’t so clear.

That makes for a challenge for your pastor, as I seek to achieve the right measure of encouragement (or exhortation) and the appropriate challenge for everyone “to participate faithfully in this church’s worship and service”, as every church member has promised upon joining the church or professing their faith. On the one side of that equation, there is the danger of my being overbearing, urging you to fulfill outward commitments that might be excessive or exasperating. I recognize that there are good and legitimate reasons for some people to miss some of the activities of the church, especially the mid-week ones. There are times, given sickness and physical weakness as well as other providential hindrances, when even worship on the Lord’s Day is not possible. Further, still on the side of that which could be judged oppressive, there is the danger of so overly emphasizing the external activities of the church that matters of the heart become overlooked. That breeds a Pharisaical hypocrisy which would rightly be condemned by Jesus’ own words, “For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” (Matthew 23:27-28) To express that in a very positive way, “the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

On the other hand, without adequate emphasis, some of the activities of the church might be perceived as unnecessary or just plain unimportant. With that perception, a culpable laziness and spiritual carelessness can easily set in. As well as bad habits. Again with reference to the heart, Jeremiah speaks of us all when the Lord speaks through the words of the prophet, “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

Surely then, a godly exhortation to walk faithfully with the Lord includes the urging to assemble ourselves together for worship. And what a great privilege that is! What a joy it is intended by God to be, as the delight of our heart in the activity which should define the whole of our lives. Further, we have complete freedom to meet as a church anytime we wish. We are free to exercise our faith according to

Welcome!

To our visitors,
we welcome you to
Covenant Reformed
Presbyterian Church.

Visitors, please take a copy of
the burgundy colored
Welcome!
folder located on the foyer
table next to the bulletins.
Please fill out a visitor’s card
and either give it to an usher
or put it in the offering plate.

“But now God has set the members,
each one of them, in the body
just as He pleased.”
(1 Cor. 12:18 NKJV)

our own conscience, and for the most part, the government leaves us alone and we are not threatened by persecution of any kind.

So why assemble ourselves together? With reference to Sunday especially, why do we have two worship services? The simple answer is that the Session believes that schedule provides the best opportunity for our spiritual well-being and for the growing maturity of our Christian faith. The goal is to gain the benefit and profit of the means of grace God provides for us, the means by which our faith is able to mature. Thus, as a church, we frame the Lord's Day with worship, setting apart the whole of the day, or at least a large bulk of it, for the care and nurture of our souls. The goal is to gain the benefit offered to us by God through the ministry of the Word and the fellowship of the saints. We commit ourselves to the very thing for which God has created us, that we would be worshipers! (John 4:23-24)

I would add that it is in worship that we most closely approach the experience of heaven while we yet live on this earth. In a tangible and identifiable way, we enter the presence of God. We leave behind the world for a season, and we enter the tabernacle of God. We join with the saints of like precious faith. And while all our good and necessary labor and work that is required to survive in this world awaits us when we return home from church, for a brief moment of time we can enjoy a foretaste of the sabbath rest of heaven itself. God invites us to His house. With the focal point of the Lord's Supper, he offers us a meal to eat together with him, together with one another. He enters into a vital, personal conversation with us as well, speaking to us through His word even as we speak to Him through our prayers, singing, and professions of faith.

So please make our worship together a marvelous priority in your life and in your weekly schedule! Please let the fellowship we enjoy together as we worship God last just as long as it can each Sunday. The Session is aware of what might be labeled a "weariness factor," and we have recently changed our afternoon schedule slightly, eliminating the sermon review and prayer time before the afternoon service so that we can begin worship at 2 and finish around 3. We all have a finite amount of energy to expend, and there is a limit to the activities in which we as human beings can participate. Nonetheless, the ultimate priority is still to be our delight in the opportunity of offer to God the New Covenant sacrifices of our worship together.

The Psalmist said, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" (Psalm 122:1) With that frame of mind, the real question is no longer "why," why assemble ourselves together? But "when." When can I return? "When shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalm 42:2) That question is much easier to answer, of course. Thankfully, such an opportunity abounds for us!

Yours with a pastor's love,

Schedule of Preaching	
<u>May 26</u>	
AM	<i>Deuteronomy 5:7</i>
PM	<i>Galatians 2:15-21</i>
<u>June 2</u>	
AM	<i>Deuteronomy 5:8-10</i>
PM	<i>Galatians 2:19-20</i>
<u>June 9</u>	
AM	Pulpit Supply: John Carrick
PM	Pulpit Supply: John Carrick
<u>June 16</u>	
AM	<i>Deuteronomy 5:11</i>
PM	<i>Galatians 3:1-3</i>
<u>June 23</u>	
AM	<i>Deuteronomy 5:12-15</i>
PM	<i>Galatians 3:4-9</i>
<u>June 30</u>	
AM	<i>Deuteronomy 5:16</i>
PM	<i>Galatians 3:10-14</i>

Treasurer's Report					
Monthly Income		Monthly Expenses		Income minus Expenses	
January	\$11,805.00	January	\$9,645.23	January	\$2,159.77
February	\$4,033.05	February	\$7,473.56	February	(\$3,440.51)
March	\$11,958.00	March	\$14,390.41	March	(\$2,432.41)
April	\$12,610.75	April	\$7,381.82	April	\$5,228.93
YTD	\$40,406.80	YTD	\$38,891.02	YTD	\$1,515.78
<u>Monthly Average Income</u>		<u>Monthly Average Expenses</u>			
\$10,101.70		\$9,722.76			

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Everyone is invited and encouraged to come to our weekly Bible study
each Wednesday evening at 7 pm,
focusing on the prophecy of Isaiah.

We meet at the home of Marvin and Susan Kaye, 419 Spring St.

Men's Reading Group

Each Friday, 8:00 AM
at the church
studying the book, *God Is*, by Mark Jones

All the men and young men of the church are invited
for a time of study, prayer and fellowship.

Youth and Young Adult Bible Study

Thursdays 7 pm

(most weeks at the home of Mike and Cindy Shields)

Dinner at 7 pm

Bible study begins approximately 7:45 pm

Taught by Pastor Willet

Current Topic: The book of Proverbs

Everyone is invited to this discussion-based study.

Session Actions

The Session has a regular "stated" meeting each month, with occasional other special meetings.

The following were included in the work of the Session the past several months:

- Received monthly reports from the pastor on his labors and activities.
- Called our annual Congregational Meeting for January 13, 2019.
- Approved pulpit supply (Dr. John Carrick) for June 9, while the Pastor is away at General Assembly.
- Discussed various church members intending to transfer membership and those being pursued to return.
- Upon expression of evidence of repentance, removed the censure of suspension previously imposed on a church member.
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- Upon satisfactory interview, approved Jonas Bryant and Micah Bryant to make a public profession of faith and be admitted to the Lord's Supper as communicant members.
- Upon satisfactory interview, approved Diana Chaney to make a public profession of faith and be admitted to the Lord's Supper as a communicant member.
- Removed from the roll by erasure a member family according to the provisions of our Book of Church Order, having been informed that they do not desire to remain the the fellowship of of the OPC.
- Agreed for the church to rent office space for the pastor at the building of Vigilant Cyber Systems.
- Agreed to begin the afternoon worship service at 2 pm, eliminating the sermon review and incorporating the time of prayer into the worship service.
- Appointed Mark Mattson as a commissioner to the spring meeting of presbytery.
- Changed the commission serving as the Overseeing Session at Harvest OPC (Winston-Salem), by adding Pastor Calvin Keller and removing Lacy Andrews.
- Discussed Buildings and Grounds needs, including possibility of extensive upstairs bathroom renovations.
- Received monthly Treasurer's Reports.
- Received monthly Deacons' Reports and approved monthly Diaconal Fund expenditures.
- Season of prayer for the congregation at each meeting.
- Set next Stated Meeting for June 21, 9:30 am.

Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church

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336-673-3176 (Church office)
336-907-0202 (Pastor's phone)

mtairyopc.org

Pastor Scott Willet: sswillet@mac.com

Sunday Services

Sunday School Classes
10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship Service
11:00 AM

Sunday Afternoon Worship Service
2:00 PM

Other Activities

Wed. Night Bible Study
7:00 PM
Meeting at the Kaye home, 419 Spring St.

Thursday Night Youth and Young Adult Bible Study
7:00 PM
Meeting at the Shields' home, 250 Apollo Dr.

Men's Reading Group
Friday 8:00 AM
Meeting at the church