

A LAMPSTAND

FOR MOUNT AIRY

COVENANT REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PASTOR SCOTT WILLET

NOVEMBER 2020

Kindness

Some things in life are more important than others. Some things in our Christian lives are more important than others. And sometimes we pick the wrong things to be the most important. What often gets neglected is an emphasis upon character. Matters of the heart. The fruit of the spirit. Yet that is what sanctification is all about, that is what holiness is all about. That is what Christianity is all about. Not the outward show. Not the external display of gifts. Not the intellectual prowess or theological precision of the mind. Rather, the heart. The spirit.

In recent years, I have learned the value of friendship in a new and fresh way. The priority of friendship. Sometimes that lesson has come through the pain of betrayal—having to come to terms with someone whom I would have previously called a friend choosing to inflict wounds of unkindness. Sometimes, thankfully, it has come through the good actions of someone who has chosen to be a friend. Surely a huge part of the healing process from the trauma inflicted by the former is the pleasantness of those who have chosen the latter path, those choosing to be a friend. In particular, I am thankful for several specific people whom I have come to be able to call friend in the past several years. I am also thankful for several specific people who have demonstrated their friendship over a period of many, many years. I have learned not to take that for granted. I have learned to value those whom I can legitimately call friend.

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)

Chief among the characteristics of a good friend is that fruit of the spirit we would call kindness. This same fruit of God's grace at work in our lives should be prominent within the definition of our Christian maturity. Chief among those human attributes which we use to describe the progress of sanctification should be this quality of friendship. It is, after all, prominent in the list of qualities Paul identifies in the book of Colossians as the new clothing which we are to put on as Christians: *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.* (Colossians 3:12) Likewise this grace of kindness is prominent in that list of the fruit of God's Holy Spirit in the lives of God's people: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.* (Galatians 5:22-23)

Even further, when Paul would instruct the Ephesian Christians about the sorts of things they should put off, put away from their lives, he clearly identifies kindness among those new clothes we are to put on. His instruction is this, *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.* (Ephesians 4:31-32)

So what is it? What is kindness? The basic meaning of the Greek word is the idea of goodness in action. Kindness begins with moral goodness, the goodness of the heart and the goodness of your attitude. Your motive and your disposition is to do good to someone else, and then that good intention is put into practice. That's kindness. Goodness in action. It is not merely the quality of goodness that matters, but goodness expressing itself in action.

I should be quick to note that kindness will not earn for you a place in heaven. Kindness does earn for you any brownie points in the sight of God such that you can claim any merit in his presence based upon what you have accomplished in your own life. Our standing before God is a matter of grace. It is all of grace. We are saved by grace, through faith in Jesus. God alone is perfectly kind, and he saves us in the kindness of his grace. But God's grace is at work in our lives as believers. God's grace, both as a motivation and an enabling power, is the means by which we are enabled to practice kindness. Indeed, what God commands of us he enables in us. Thus we are called to live according to the law of kindness. Goodness in action.

Sadly, often when the world observes the behavior of Christians, kindness is not the characteristic that shines forth. Sometimes, as we struggle in our relationships with one another in the church, or in our families, there is anything but kindness. There is mean-spiritedness. Vindictiveness. Self-advancement. Aggression. Harshness. I could on with that list. We make excuses. We're tired out, or too busy. We're under stress. Or we hide our lack of kindness under a thin veneer of superficial piety. We manipulate. We abuse. We demean. We insult. All of that should never be.

Instead, this fruit of the Holy Spirit should be that which is of most importance. This law of kindness should govern the whole of our lives, in the personal and private relationship of family and home as well as the public relationships we enjoy in the church. By God's grace, this kindness should be the characteristic we enjoy in our communities as well, among our neighbors. And sadly, though it is not a present reality, it should be evident in the highest places of authority and power within our country. Kindness. That is what matters most to our Lord. That is what should best describe and define our lives as children of God—believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Goodness in action.

I am thankful for a good measure of kindness in our church. That kindness to me was, from my very first arrival here nearly five years ago, such a balm, such a fragrant aroma of good will. I will never forget that experience. It is a debt I am eager to repay. Although I don't ever want to have to choose between the two (and we never should have to do so), if I had to choose between theological precision and personal kindness as characteristics of those whom I would call my friends, I'd choose kindness every day of the week.

I hope that we always remain a church defined by our convictions, our proper and accurate understanding of biblical teaching. I believe that we will. But I also yearn for the mark of genuine kindness to be unmistakable among us, goodness in action in our relationships with one another. Kindness displayed in how we treat one another, how we speak to one another, what we say about one another. And what we say to one another. There is no substitute for such evidence of God in our heart. There is suitable replacement if this matter of the heart is overlooked. Ultimately, as a church, there is no hope for us without such kindness.

Therefore, please give thought to your own exercise of kindness, a consistent and honest self-awareness with respect to your calling as Christian to show forth kindness. It may not bring you any prominence in the eyes of men, but it will bring you great honor in the eyes of God. And it will be the great glory of our church.

Schedule of Preaching

November 8

AM *Deuteronomy 29:1-28*
PM *Philippians 2:14-18*

November 15

AM *Deuteronomy 29:29*
PM *Philippians 2:19-30*

November 22

AM *Deuteronomy 30:1-20*
PM *Philippians 3:1-11*

November 29

AM *Deuteronomy 31:1-29*
PM *Philippians 3:12-16*

December 6

AM *Deuteronomy 32:1-52*
PM *Philippians 3:17-4:1*

ThankOffering

Please notice the bulletin inserts this month, emphasizing the work of the OPC Committees on Home Missions, Foreign Missions and Christian Education. The whole work of the whole church is funded in a united budget called "Worldwide Outreach," and the ThankOffering will be given entirely to Worldwide Outreach.

This special offering will be for the next three weeks.

Please use a ThankOffering envelope or otherwise indicate ThankOffering on a check made out to the church.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Everyone is invited and encouraged to come to our weekly Bible study
each Wednesday evening at 7 pm, via Zoom.

We are studying the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)

Please join us online. All are invited.

Men's Reading Group

Each Friday, 9:00 AM
at the church

studying the book, *Devoted to God*, by Sinclair Ferguson

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

Treasurer's Report

Monthly Income

September	\$13,201.98
October	\$9,289.00
YTD	\$111,343.12

Monthly Expenses

September	\$17,140.44
October	\$8,249.12
YTD	\$105,802.60

Income minus Expenses

September	(\$3,938.46)
October	\$1,039.88
YTD	\$5,440.52

Monthly Average Income

\$11,134.31

Monthly Average Expenses

\$10,580.26

Monthly Budget

\$12,500.00

Session Actions

Actions of the Session in previous months include:

Transfer of membership for Sarah Carpenter to her new church in Memphis.

Transfer of Gary and Rene Coston to their new church in Maine.

Transfer of Abby Carpenter to the Harvest roll in Winston-Salem.

Reception of new members: Shawna Ramey; Earl, Debbie and Caleb Blackburn; David and Donna Newell.

Schedule of baptisms for Emmett Ramey (2/9/20) and Jasper Ramey (10/25/20).

Approved construction of an outdoor picnic pavilion, paid for by donations and up to \$4,000 from the general fund.

Approved an additional \$2,000 to be added to the budget for costs of internet LiveStream of our worship service, to include monthly internet and LiveStream platform costs, as well as camera and microphone.

Agreed to resume a second worship service at 5 pm in the evening (beginning September 6), then to return to the 2 pm second service (beginning October 4), and to resume the fellowship luncheon (beginning October 4).

Approved pulpit supply for the vacation weeks observed by Pastor Willet.

Received monthly Treasurer's Reports and Deacon's Fund Reports.

Discussed the timeframe for beginning Deacon Training with men nominated, and to encourage those men nominated to attend the OPC Deacon's Conference June 10-12 in Wheaton, IL.

Discussed various matters with regard to the work of our Presbytery, appointing Mark Mattson as a representative for the October 16-17 stated meeting.

The session has an extended season of prayer for all church members and visitors each meeting.

Next meeting date will be December 12, 10 am at the Vigilant Cyber System office building, 1326 N. Main St.

Live Stream

Our church website was significantly improved with the addition of LiveStream for our worship services beginning in October. The LiveStream is available for everyone who is unable to attend worship in person, either because of temporary illnesses/travel or because of the heightened dangers of the COVID-19 pandemic. The LiveStream is also available publicly for anyone who wishes to join us in that way.

Worship service recordings will remain available on the website, in addition to audio sermon recordings and sermon manuscripts. Please familiarize yourself with the website if you have not done so.

Please let Pastor Willet know if you have any pictures available in electronic form that could be used on the website. Josiah DeGraaf has agreed to work as an administrator on the site as well—please let him know if you find any errors or have any constructive suggestions for the improvement of the site. If you encounter temporary problems in a LiveStream on a Sunday, please be patient, as Josiah will be resolving whatever glitches might arise.

www.mtairyopc.org

2020 Singles Retreat
Machen Retreat and Conference Center
McDowell, VA
RESCHEDULED FOR APRIL 16-18, 2021

Theme Statement
Serving God in All the Seasons of Your Life

Theme Verse
*To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven.
Ecclesiastes 3:1*

Speaker
Pastor Scott Willet

Personal Invitation

I want to invite you to the 2020 Singles Retreat at MRCC, emphasizing at the outset that I want to focus your thinking on the concept of seasons of life. Singleness is not simply a temporary prelude to marriage, nor is it merely something to be endured as some sort of struggle or incompleteness. In that context, there is no singular definition of the impact of singleness upon your lives nor broad over-arching goal that should define singleness for everyone uniformly. Thus the broader concept upon which we will focus, beginning with Ecclesiastes 3:1, To everything there is a season. Recognizing that the providence of God governs all those seasons in all of our lives, the goal of the retreat will be to recognize, define, evaluate, and embrace the seasons of your own life. Ultimately, the goal is contentment and hope. (1 Timothy 6:6)

The great benefit of a retreat at MRCC is that we will have time not only to relax and enjoy all the beauty of Highland County, but also time to talk and interact together. There will be time for questions and for thinking out loud, both in our group sessions as well as informal conversations. I hope you will get to know me as I look forward to getting to know all of you. I expect to present the opening and closing segments (Saturday morning and Sunday worship) in a preaching format, but the Saturday evening and Sunday School segments will be designed much more as interactive teaching opportunities. For those who are able to arrive in time Friday evening, I will also plan a time of informal discussion not simply designed as an ice breaker, but more so as a time to begin the process of thinking (talking and listening) together. I hope that I can stimulate your mind in a good way, and help you to understand not only your current season of life but be well prepared for whatever seasons of life might remain ahead of you.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION:
<https://machen.org/camps-and-events/singles-retreat/>

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
Currently cancelled due to COVID-19

Sunday Morning Worship Service
11:00 AM

Fellowship Luncheon
12:30 AM

Sunday Evening Worship Service
2:00 PM

Other Activities

Wed. Night Bible Study
7:00 PM
Meeting by Zoom

Thursday Night Youth and Young Adult Bible Study
Meeting will resume when possible.

Men's Reading Group
Friday 9:00 AM
Meeting at the church