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"Telling the Truth"

A word from the pastor

"Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the Lord is coming; Surely it is near, " -- Joel 2:1

"For thus says the Lord of hosts, "After glory He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye." -- Zechariah 2:8

"The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy." -- Zephaniah 3:17

Over the last several months, I have deeply enjoyed my time preparing to preach through the Minor Prophets. I have found one concept in particular hard to wrap my

feeble mind around as I have read and reflected upon these works. I have repeatedly read of the wrath of God being displayed on the day of the Lord (which we translate as, "the day when God's righteous anger is made visible against sinful people or entire nations"). At the same time, I read the most beautiful, descriptive language which revealed God's amazing love towards, at times, those same people. In my own life, love and wrath seem to be in different arenas, never to be seen at the same time. If love rules, then wrath is gone! If wrath is present, then love might not be so evident.

Yet, we are reminded by the Scriptures that God is so wonderfully *other* than we are. And in doing so, they unashamedly show us that God's righteous anger against sin and His incomprehensible love for His people go hand in hand. God is Holy and has a right hatred of sin! God is Love, and lavishes His love upon those whom He will have as His own people! How can this be? Although the Minor Prophets point towards the answer, the answer is ultimately not known until the Christ erupts onto the scene in the Gospels. Here we see God's wrath and love not minimized, but rather intensified. Until finally

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"Telling the Truth" (cont'd)

they reach a kind of climax at the cross. God's wrath against sin is fully revealed! God's love is on display in high definition.

It is my hope that through our time in the Minor Prophets your vision of and passion for the God Who Is has greatly increased. God's wrath against your sin has been fully satisfied on the cross. And God's love for you will never be more evident than by looking at that very same cross. Worship the Lord who sings over you with shouts of joy. Rest in the arms of your Lord Who looks at you, not as a child He is disgusted with, but as the "apple of His eye." God's love is life changing and will lead you to love radically and risk much for the gospel.

Will you pray for God to do great things through GRBC? May He raise up many faithful leaders among us. May He birth new believers and new congregations through us in the coming months and years. May the Lord bless you and cause you to live with urgency for the cause of Christ and with great zeal for the glory of His Name. And please pray for wisdom and insight as I prepare for our next sermon series in the book of Philippians.

-- Pastor Rick



Growing in Grace

The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers. And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord (Deuteronomy 8:1-3, ESV).

In spite of all of life's challenges, set-backs, discouragements, and unknowns God leads his people along toward the good that he has determined for them. His heart toward his people is tender and kind, and even though they may "hunger" in the way, he feeds them with manna. The journey is often difficult, but only so that we are humbled and our hearts are exposed. God designs our wilderness wanderings to result in teaching us a life-transforming lesson: true spiritual life is not found in physical bread, but in the spiritual food that proceeds only from God. Ultimately this spiritual food is tasted as we come to know the Lord Jesus Christ, himself the Bread of Life. My family and I have seen this passage come to life in the last several years as he has continued to grow us to more fully embrace the fact that we do not live by bread alone. We have seen him orchestrating our life and preparing us to serve his church; it is thrilling that God has seen fit to place us here at Green Run. We are so extremely excited to serve with you here! May the name of the Lord Jesus be exalted as we grow "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13, ESV) and reach out into our community "for the sake of the name" (3 John 7, ESV).

I also want to express gratitude to the church body for the very kind reception and welcome you have extended to us. From our first visits here to the time we actually moved here we have been the glad recipients of genuine Christ-like love. Your words of welcome, prayers, meals and gifts, offers of assistance, and every other expression of care and concern have been immensely helpful. Thank you all particularly for the welcome meal and the very generous pounding you gave us. We are excited to be here and look forward to serving with you for the glory of God and the fame of the Lord Jesus!

-- Pastor Stephen

C.O.R.E. Connection

Greetings church family and visitors. This column is dedicated to connecting you with what the Lord is doing in our student ministry here at Green Run Baptist Church. While being the 7th to 12th graders within the congregation, the Lord is doing some great things in and with us! It is our desire that along with you we would know and love Jesus more while helping others to do the same.

Since the beginning of the year in our Bible Fellowships we have seen the Lord do some great things. We've seen Him at work in the hearts and minds of our youth as the Spirit is making connections and molding the students into His image. We look forward to seeing how else the Lord will have His way in our lives in the upcoming months.

As we transition from studying a God-centered worldview during our Sunday morning time we will be looking next into the topic of atonement. We will examine the need for atonement, see how the atonement is foreshadowed in the Old Testament, and see how Jesus is at the center of a biblical view of atonement.

Our Community Group meets on Wednesday nights. As a group, we have seen our desire to meet together really grow in the past few months. So much so, that we are starting to meet weekly as a community group, whereas before we were just meeting every other week. We are excited for what the Lord has planned during the rest of the year as it will help us connect more deeply together and with the rest of the church body. Join us Wednesday nights so we can all grow together in the coming months.

We also had our annual Christmas Party in December which was a ton of fun! We had a good turnout and have some hilarious pictures to prove it. It was held at the Williams Farms Recreation Center so we could enjoy a little swimming in the winter. Over the next couple of months we have some other events planned where the students will be challenged in their faith and maybe even have a good time, too.

In the past few months we have been looking into developing and maintaining a God-centered worldview. Pray for us about that if you would. We are going to continue along examining sexuality, marriage and the sanctity of human life while being a blessing in our world and community.

Thanks,
Brian Tooley & the C.O.R.E. Student Ministry Team
brian@greenrunbaptist.com

Passing Thoughts

Midwinter Grace

By Karen McSpadden

Midwinter does things to my sense of hope.

The grass in my yard is dead, the earth by the sidewalk turned to cold sludge-- something the ground spits at my boots out of sheer malice. The oak tree across the road is nothing but branch-bones. Even the noon sunlight is tentative and half-hearted.

Of course I fight back-- I put soup in the crockpot and wear fuzzy socks. I dig out extra blankets and light nutmeg candles. I play music that puts dancing in my feet while I wash the dishes, but at the corner of the kitchen window, bruise-black winter night creeps up pane by pane. Something in my soul rolls over to hibernate, to burrow deep and forget things like *wonder* and *joy* and *beauty* that seem more fitted to spring.

Maybe I'm not the only one. Maybe you're tired too.

What I want to say to both of us is *don't go numb*. Don't sleep it off. Watch the sky darken and *wait*. Winter, with its slush and mud and cold fingers and dampened hearts, is really a promise. You and I and creation itself are living out this dead time, knowing that beneath the ugly ground are green and growing things. When He calls the earth to awaken, the sun on our windows will shine strong. Rain will soften and warm even the dirt in my yard. The azaleas by the bedroom window will bloom.

It works the same way when it's midwinter in your soul.

Sometimes you look at your heart and see a dirty field, icy and hard from whatever freeze has entered your life. Or you see a hateful muck of sin that clings thick and soils everything. Even His light seems to fall slant on your soul, thin against swift-falling darkness. You chase grace by whatever means you can. You gather to worship Him. You warm yourself over His Word like hands over fire. You pray for thaw. You may even sing, sending up praise like a tiny sparrow headlong into winter wind, but the cold spell stretches on and the ache won't quit. Like wind howling around house corners, a bleak and insistent voice tells you to just stop seeking Him. Curl up and forget. Make do.

Don't.

You are His. He won't leave you frozen and mired.

Yes, in sovereign love He sends His own into winter, but He plants His fruit even in the seemingly dead times. Some seeds need the cold before they can germinate. Some works of grace come alive only after barrenness has driven us to yet another end of ourselves. To an even fuller understanding that He is our new beginning. He is our spring. When He calls your soul to be green and growing again, you will be amazed at what He has planted, what He was working in you *all the time*.

Your heart will soften. Your soul will warm. You will lift up your head in joy and bloom.

Extra Reading

Helping Someone Through A Salvation Experience

By Pastor David Platt

As we walk in the presence of Christ, we'll have opportunities to make new disciples of Jesus. We'll have the privilege of inviting people to turn from their sin and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. This won't happen because of our cleverness or evangelistic prowess; it will happen because of the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. But how should we handle these moments on a practical level? What should we say and what should we do when God grants us the privilege of harvesting a new follower of Christ?

Prayer is a right and biblical response to the gospel. When you share the gospel, it's good to invite people to call out for God to save them. At the same time, it's unnecessary (and in some ways unhelpful) to tell people what they must say in order to be saved.

If, after hearing the gospel clearly and fully, people see God for who He is, their sin for what it is, and Christ for who He is and what He's done, and if they're willing to repent and believe in Jesus—to turn from their sin and to trust in Him as Savior and Lord—then there are no particular words they need to recite. There's no added value in asking them to repeat certain words after you say them.

Rather, the Spirit of God has awakened their hearts to the gospel of God, He enables them to repent and believe—to cry out for His mercy as they submit to His majesty. So encourage them to do so at that moment. And in some cases it may actually be best to encourage people to be alone with God so that you won't unknowingly, unintentionally, or unhelpfully manipulate a decision, circumstance, or situation.

Basically, as you call others to submit to the Person of Christ, you can trust the Spirit of Christ to bring them to salvation. In the same way you've committed to depend on the presence of Christ as His disciple, allow new believers to depend on His presence as they choose to follow Him.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, once someone repents and believes in Christ, be willing to lead that person as a new follower of Christ (added words from editor--Disciples of Christ Make Disciples Matthew 28). Remember, our goal isn't to count decisions; our goal is to make disciples—and to do so through the presence and power of God's Spirit in us.

This article has been excerpted from Follow Me Bible Study by David Platt.

Theological Reserve

ALONE. Have you ever felt completely and utterly alone? I don't mean the occasional feeling of missing a loved one or even the feeling of being ostracized for an opinion. I'm referring to the deepest sense of the word. Have you ever felt as if you had nobody to turn to, nobody to love you, and nobody who cared about you? I can honestly say I haven't ever felt this deep feeling of loneliness, yet I know there are many who have. It is discouraging to me whenever I hear of someone who feels this way. As mankind, God has decreed that it is not good that we be alone (Genesis 2:18). As saddening as it may be to me, I can only imagine how depressing and devastating it must be in the life of the one who has lost all hope of human connection. Sadly, we all too often see the tangible results of such thoughts and feelings in the form of suicides and mourning loved ones who just couldn't be seen through the fog of despair.

I recently had an encounter with a random stranger. He confided in me that he had renounced the Christian faith. His reasons were plenty but one in particular stood out to me. He felt like God had abandoned him. In a time of extreme struggle and hardship, he reached out to God but felt as if God had not reached out in return. To him this was the final straw. How could a loving God leave a man in such turmoil? How could a kind God sit back and watch as he suffered the indignities of cruel humanity? How could the Father not respond to His child when he was pleading for help? At this moment, he had lost all hope in both his fellow man and God. He had reconciled in his mind that God was nothing more than the imaginary hope that man wanted Him to be. He was now hopeless. He had nobody.

How do we respond to such confessions? Do we treat them as any other criticism of the Christian faith? Do we bust out our Bibles and begin the Scripture recitations? Ashamedly, this is how many self-proclaimed Christians behave when faced with similar situations. There is a time and a place for standing firm in the Scriptures at all costs but there is always time to let the Scriptures speak in love. I saw it as the perfect opportunity to share with him God's redemptive story beginning in Genesis. I shared how God had created mankind perfect and upright in His image (Genesis 1). I explained how mankind fell to the temptations of Satan and how, as a result, mankind was cursed (Genesis 3). I shed light on some practical examples and how sin shows itself in our daily lives. I explained how we have all sinned (Romans 3:23) and are worthy of death (Romans 6:23). We looked at Ephesians 2:1 telling us we are dead in our trespasses and sins. He had shared with me how he had done so much for his fellow man only to be greeted with thanklessness in return. This prompted a review of Isaiah 64:6 where it is stated that even our greatest works are as filthy rags. Sin is nothing more than a failure to put God at the center of all things. Regardless of what we may deem good, this goodness will always be in the relative sense and our works will always be tainted. Unless God is at the center, it will always be as foul as filthy, blood-stained rags. Nothing we can ever dream of doing will ever earn God's favor, nor should we expect it to net us something in return. Even if our entire life should reflect the portion where Job suffered worst, it would only be a small portion of what we actually deserve for our rebellion against God Almighty.

My goal in all of this was to show how, as mankind, we are depraved and sinful beings. We have a sense of entitlement when, in reality, we deserve nothing. Yet, as sinful beings worthy of nothing, God has decreed that it is not good for man to be alone. Indeed, even when we have nothing, we know that God does not want us to feel alone. I could've left our discussion at that but then I'd be no better than those fierce

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"Theological Reserve" (cont'd)

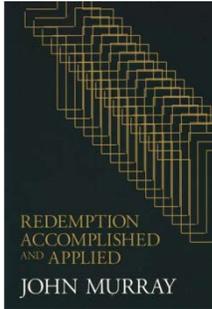
Christians I spoke of earlier. Where would my demonstration of Christ-like love be? After all, he was already feeling the bitterness of being alone. Should I kick him while he's down and tell him he deserves nothing due to his sinfulness? No, there was too much left to the story to leave it at that. I wanted to make it abundantly clear that God has promised never to leave nor forsake His own (Hebrews 13:5). If we have been reconciled to the Father through Christ the Son (2 Corinthians 5:18), He will always be with us. Though we may not always feel His presence, we can be assured He is there with us. Just as He has declared it is not good for man to be alone, He has also declared we will always have communion with Him through the Son.

Of course, none of this would be complete without tying it into Christ's redemptive work. I wanted to highlight the fact that Christ, God in the flesh, came to this Earth with a specific purpose. He lived a sinless life only to be met with contempt. He demonstrated love in its perfection only to be met with hate, mockery, and an excruciating death. He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21). Hanging on that cross, he was cursed by God (Galatians 3:13) so that we would not be. Christ knew communion with God better than any of us could ever imagine. He was God! He had the most intimate of relationships with the Father. Yet, this innocent man came from the Father to give himself up as the ultimate sacrifice to appease the wrath of God and reconcile all of His own. That moment when Christ became sin (note, not a sinner) he experienced perhaps the greatest agony of all. No, it was not the nails piercing his skin nor was it the scourged flesh hanging off his body nor was it the salted sweat dripping into his wounds. In the midst of such torment, Christ had to endure the fact that God the Father turned His back on His Son (Matthew 27:46). This was the most unimaginable sorrow any man had ever felt. Christ had the feeling of absolute loneliness on that cross. His own Father had forsaken him. It had to be this way if Christ were to accomplish that which he came to perform.

As alone as a person may feel, it will never come close to what Christ had to endure. God Himself has assured us of this. Friends, if you or someone you know ever feels totally alone, I encourage you to remember that God is with you. Even if your heart tells you there is nobody there, please understand that the heart is deceitful above all else and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). Though the Christian has been set free from the shackles of sin, there is still a very real battle against the flesh. If you are a Christian, I implore you to pray harder than ever before and to not lose hope that God is by your side. Whether or not you feel He is answering your prayers, they will be answered in His perfect time and we need to place our unwavering trust in the God who created the universe. Trust that the God who forsook His Son has promised never to leave nor forsake us. This should be an encouragement to the greatest degree. If you are not a Christian, it is my prayer that you would look to God, cast all of your burdens upon Him, be honest before Him, and trust in the miraculous gift of Christ. Only then will you truly understand the hope found within (1 Peter 3:15) that comes from knowing Christ. Friend, you do not have to be alone.

In Christ,
Travis Rogers

Recommended Reading



Redemption: Accomplished and Applied

by **John Murray**

Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (1955)

Reviewed by: Travis Rogers

Everything revolves around the atonement.

In this book, John Murray masterfully conveys exactly what the atonement is all about. It was accomplished by Christ alone for the redemption of the Elect alone. The atonement is the precision instrument used by God to reconcile His Elect unto Himself. Murray describes the unique relationship we have with God through adoption and how this was only made possible through the blood of Christ. All the while, he consistently points out how it is our sovereign Lord who is behind it all.

Murray describes the atonement as "vicarious obedience, expiation, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption performed by the Lord of glory when, once for all, he purged our sins and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high." (pg. 55) As you read, you will find answers to many controversial topics such as whether Christ died for all or for a few. Did he sacrifice himself for all or for the Elect? Whom did he redeem from the curse of the law? On whose behalf did he propitiate the wrath of God? According to Murray, the order in the application of redemption is: calling, regeneration, faith and repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and glorification. I highly recommend this read to find out why!

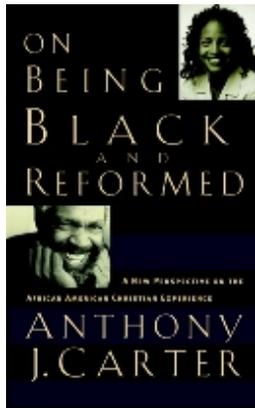
Quotables

"The Bible isn't merely an inanimate object that we study and pull information from. It has a life of its own. It acts. It reads us; it pierces to the deepest parts of our being and discerns our motivations." -- *Francis Chan (Multiply, pg 119)*

"If He is sovereign, we ask of silent nature, how can I be free? If I am free how can He be sovereign? Is His sovereignty an illusion or is my freedom? What shall I choose, His sovereignty, or my own freedom? If I choose His sovereignty, which seems self-evident, how can I continue to be responsible for my own actions? If I choose my own freedom, how can He continue to be sovereign? Once again, this is no idle question but is fraught with the greatest moment for the human soul." -- *John Gerstner (Reasons For Faith, pg 66)*

Off the Shelf

(GRBC bookstore notables)



On Being Black and Reformed

by Anthony J. Carter

P&R Publishing (2003)

How can an African-American consciousness and Reformed theology benefit each other? Where was God in the Atlantic Slave Trade? How does Christianity triumph among people historically oppressed in part by the church itself? Anthony Carter brings positive, informed responses to such questions, thereby enriching our understanding and furthering racial reconciliation.



Financial Review

We want to give glory to God for the faithful who help support the ministry here at GRBC. We believe the Lord has put this congregation in this community for the purpose of making much of His glory, even as we seek to expand His kingdom to the ends of the earth. We cannot accomplish our mission without your gospel-driven generosity.

Although our giving has been down over the last few months, we find more reason for hope than concern. We remember the words of Haggai 2:7-9-- *“I will fill this house with glory,” says the Lord of hosts. ‘The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,’ declares the Lord of hosts. ‘The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘and in this place I will give peace,’ declares the Lord of hosts.”* Our confidence is in His power to accomplish His purposes for His glory and our joy.

What would we ask of you? First and foremost, continue to draw near to Christ through the gospel. Be amazed at what God has, is, and will do! Second, pray. Pray that God would continue to give this congregation a gospel-driven generosity to support our missions & ministry through the church budget. Finally, continue to do your part. Pray that God would give you the grace necessary to give and support the ministry of GRBC. Look for ways to continue to use what God has given you to build up this church and expand His kingdom.

Financial Secretary,
GRBC

Annual budget (2013-2014)-----\$265,594.44
Weekly Budgeted Needs-----\$5,107.59

<u>Monthly Giving for December, 2013/January, 2014</u>			
December 1 st -----	\$6,792.25	January 5 th -----	\$5,346.00
December 8 th -----	\$6,519.00	January 12 th -----	\$4,230.00
December 15 th -----	\$3,820.64	January 19 th -----	\$5,254.30
December 22 th -----	\$2,946.95	January 26 th -----	<u>\$4,229.39</u>
December 29 th -----	<u>\$4,055.55</u>		\$19,059.69
	\$24,134.39		

Corporate Worship

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!" (Psalm 122:1)

As we continue yet another year at GRBC, let us be reminded that we are here to worship a God who always makes good on His word. In Jesus Christ, God has promised us renewal, freedom from the hold of sin and eternal salvation.

Our main gathering for corporate worship happens on Sunday mornings. However, we have begun a new Sunday evening service which begins at 6pm. This service is a great way to book end the Lord's Day with worship and offers those who, for good reasons, cannot make the morning service an opportunity to worship with the church family. Our passion is to encounter the Great and Glorious God through Christ exalting, gospel centered singing, prayers, giving, and preaching. Our worship should inform the mind with biblical truth and inspire the heart to live for the glory of God.

If you have questions about our services, or would like to find out how you can serve in our worship gatherings, please contact Alyson for information about music ministry or one of the elders about helping with any other roles.

Sunday Morning Bible Fellowships

Biblical education is essential for the life of a healthy, growing congregation. In order for GRBC to better equip our congregation, we offer what we are calling Bible Fellowship Classes from 9-9:50am every Sunday Morning. These groups are intended to increase the opportunities we have to biblically educate people in every stage of life.

Children's Bible Fellowship Classes—we have five children's classes; Newborn's through age 1, 2's and 3's, Pre-K through K, 1st through 3rd grades and fourth through sixth grades. Our CBF classes all meet upstairs in the education building. Our curriculum for the classes is "The Gospel Project for Kids." This is three year overview of the entire bible.

Student Bible Fellowship Classes include students from 7th through the 12th grades and meets in the student room in the front of the worship center. Our student curriculum is "The Gospel Project for Students." They are currently working through the doctrine "Made in the Image of God".

Adult Bible Fellowship Classes--The **Cornerstone Class** is currently working through the Beatitudes, and is lead by Roy Ammons. They meet in the Multi-Purpose Room #1. Pastor Joe leads an adult class which is preparing to study the Pastoral Epistles. They meet in the Fellowship Hall. Doug Applegate leads the other adult class and they are working through the Gospel Project curriculum study on the implications of being made in the image of God. They meet in the Multi-Purpose Room #2.

Community Groups

At **GRBC**, we seek to genuinely practice 'doing life together'. Our small groups are made up of 8-15 individuals who meet at various times throughout the week, with the primary purpose being the practice and pursuit of genuine Biblical friendship & fellowship. Here, we meet with our friends and neighbors to wrestle with and apply the truth of God's Word, to experience gospel grace, to care for one another and to serve our church and community. These groups also provide opportunity to care for one another's practical needs.

Doug & Katie Applegate's group meets on Thursday nights at 6:30pm. Ken & Nancy Butler's groups meets on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month at 7pm. Quinton and Jackie Rowe's group meets at 11am each Wednesday. Fred and Mary Preston's group meets on the 2nd & 4th Sunday of each month at 1pm.

If you would like more information about any of our groups please contact the church office at 427-5087.



BIRTHDAYS	
Peggy Humphreys	2/3
Matt Ammons	2/8
Abbie Watkins	2/10
Vincent Adams	2/13
Jackie Rowe	2/14
Joyce Hughes	2/20
Joseph Gwynn	2/23
Tommie McElhaney	2/24
Maureen Kimbrough	2/25
Louis Beasley	2/27

ANNIVERSARIES	
Jason & April Esquivel	1/3
James & Debra Anderson	2/11
Carlene Watson	2/12
Corey & Lene Hannah	2/12
Ramsey & Barbara Franklin	2/22
Joseph & Sandra Gwynn	2/24
Matt & Kim Stairs	2/27
Kevin & Carrie Sowell	2/28

Important Dates

Every Wednesday

Every Wednesday

Every Wednesday

Every Wednesday

March 28-29

April 20

Ladies study (6:00 p.m.)

Men's book study (6:00 p.m.)

RA's, GA's, and Mission Friends (6:00 p.m.)

C.O.R.E. Community Group (6:00 p.m.)

Dare to Share Conference

Easter Service

The Green Runnings is a bi-monthly publication of Green Run Baptist Church.

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Submit information to Travis Rogers by the second Sunday of the month preceding publication by e-mail, in person or at the church office. The editor reserves the right to edit for content or space. May the Father be glorified in every word.