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A Message From the Pastor - Neal Carter

As we begin to settle into this new year, with the many things we have going on at RRPC (a capital campaign to finish off the debt for the fellowship/education building, Grief-share starting back up, increasing the influence of music in our worship, inviting folks to increase our worship attendance, working on our budget), I stumbled onto some words from Howard Thurman, a 20th-century preacher, theologian, mystic, activist, and spiritual father for the Civil Rights Movement. Part of one of his sermons came to mind for me recently called, "Lord, Lord, Open Unto Me."

- Open unto me – light for my darkness.
- Open unto me – courage for my fear.
- Open unto me –hope for my despair.
- Open unto me – peace for my turmoil.
- Open unto me – joy for my sorrow.
- Open unto me – strength for my weakness.
- Open unto me – wisdom for my confusion.
- Open unto me – forgiveness for my sins.
- Open unto me – tenderness for my toughness.
- Open unto me – love for my hates.
- Open unto me – Thy Self for my self.

Lord, Lord, open unto me!

And I think this makes a good prayer for each of us this year. As we continue to bear our griefs, face our challenges, and celebrate everything God is doing here (which is a lot), I wonder if all of us should put these words on our refrigerators or our bathroom mirrors or by our bedsides or wherever we can force ourselves to pray them every ay. As we begin to roll into 2018 with the many, I wonder if we can pray together for God to open to us the gifts of light, courage, hope, peace, joy, and all the rest that we might grow God's table here and now on our busy corner of Cabarrus County. May we pray together and work together to grow in faith in ministry together.



I recently read *The Hottest Thing at Church Is Not Your Pastor or Worship Leader*, by Kate Shellnutt from Christianity Today magazine. Well, according to the Gallup poll, it's the sermon. With all the discussions about contemporary worship, and the new church buzzwords like relational, relevant, and intentional, according to the Gallup poll, people who show up on Sundays are looking for the same thing that has long anchored most services: preaching centered on the Bible.

"Sermons that teach about Scripture" are the No. 1 reason Americans go to church. Researchers found that 82 percent of Protestants and 76 percent of all regular worshipers consider sermons' biblical lessons as a major factor that draws them to services. They're also looking for application, as 80 percent of Protestants and 75 percent of worshipers valued sermons that connect faith to everyday life.

Preaching on Scripture and its relevance ranked above factors like kids programs (68%), community outreach (61%), and social activities (49%).

The Gallup survey found that people in the pews care far more about what's being preached than who's preaching it. Only half (53%) said they attend because of "dynamic religious leaders who are interesting and inspiring." Matt Woodley, from Preaching Today's annual State of Preaching outlook writes, "Deep preaching is our best chance to change lives."

In a distracted, outraged, shallow culture, congregations are still looking for something more in a sermon. As one minister, Ed Stetzer, writes, "In other words, those for whom sermons were being dumbed down aren't dumb. They are interested in the truth or else they'd be out golfing." **Suddenly, I feel a lot of pressure.**



WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP MEALS
 6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
COST: \$5/meal, \$15/family maximum
 The caterer donates \$1 from every \$5 collected back to the Youth group!

ALL ARE INVITED!

Menu For February
February 7 - Soups, Salads and Desserts
Free Community Meal
February 14 - Matchmakers chicken--Veggie and Rice
February 21 - BBQ pork Sandwiches
February 28 - Taco Bar (beef)

To RSVP, indicate how many will be coming when you sign the attendance book or call the office.



FAMILY GAME NIGHT!!

Friday
 February 9th and 23rd
 7:00pm

Bring your favorite game and a snack to share!
 Meet in the Fellowship Hall

February Birthdays

Name	Birthday	Name	Birthday
Chris Horton	2/2	Mark Williams	2/13
Emery Talton	2/2	Judy Harazim	2/15
Jason Linker	2/4	Neal Dulin	2/15
Mike Harazim	2/4	Erin Hancock	2/16
Aydenn Harris	2/5	Baxter Coble	2/17
Tommy Mullis	2/6	Isabella Tankersley	2/17
Johnny Freeman	2/7	Annelise Geist	2/18
Mike Fisher	2/7	Devon Hayes	2/18
Kate Freeman	2/8	Megan Burr	2/19
Greyson Jakiela	2/10	Isabella Rockel	2/21
Trina Hadfield Jones	2/10	Chip Wells	2/22
Betsy Biggers	2/11	Scott Swaringen	2/24
David Graham	2/12	Scott Burr	2/25
Robin Hartsell	2/12	DeDe Dickerson	2/27
Arianna Murray	2/13	Helen Ann Funk	2/27
Mark Tankersley	2/13	Caleb Watson	2/28

Presbyterian Women Morning & Evening Circles

All women are invited the first Tuesday of each month for study and fellowship.

Tuesday, February 6

Morning Circle: 10:00a.m., Church January 9

Evening Circle: 7:00 p.m., the home of Mimi Reynolds

All of the women of the church are invited and encouraged to be a part of the Presbyterian Women Circle and Bible Studies. We strive to minister to the congregation as a whole and to the women in particular through Bible study, prayer and fellowship. We would love to welcome some new faces to our groups! We meet the first Tuesday of each month.

Questions? Please contact Priscilla Giuliano at 704-706-3203/tttandsp@gmail.com

Rocky River Readers

Rocky River Readers will meet on Monday, February 26th at 7:00pm in the parlor at the church. We will be discussing **The Hope Chest** by Viola Shipman. This is an emotional novel about three people who have seemingly lost all hope until one woman's heirloom hope chest is rediscovered in the attic, along with its contents and secrets. With each item that is discovered—including a beloved doll, family dishes, an embroidered apron and an antique Christmas ornament --- the hope chest connects Mattie, Don and Rose to each other and not only helps them find hope again in the face of overwhelming life challenges but also brings new meaning to family.

Rocky River Readers meets each month on the fourth Monday night in the church parlor at 7pm.

New members are always welcome. Our book for the month of March is *The Stolen Marriage* by Diane Chamberlain

Questions? Please contact Marie Morrison at 704-455-2487/ morrison1960@windstream.net

Men's Breakfast

The Men's Breakfast will be held on Sunday, February 18, at 9:00a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

As always, we welcome ALL men to join us—husbands, fathers, sons, grandfathers and brothers. What a great opportunity for fellowship among our men! We would love to see some new faces at the breakfast.

Questions? Please contact Jerry Clark at 704-596-0062/gclark6@bellsouth.net

Healing Touch Clinic

The Healing Touch Clinic will be held on Sunday, February 11. A Sign up sheet will be in the vestibule for 30 minute sessions beginning @ 3pm. Additional appointments will be available with Julia Alexander on Wednesday afternoons by calling to schedule individually. There is no charge for this service. Donations to the building fund will be accepted. Please spread the word to your family and friends—members of the community are welcome to the clinic.

The clinic is held the second Sunday of each month and is open to the public.

Questions? Please contact Julia Alexander, 704-455-9753/2jralex@ctc.net

GriefShare

The Spring session will begin on February 8 and run thru May 10. The meetings are held on Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00pm. The only cost is \$15 for the workbook. Each week a new topic is addressed. Please invite anyone you know that has experienced the loss of a loved one to join us.

Questions: Contact Julia Alexander at 704-455-9753 or 2jralex@ctc.net

Service Volunteers

Chiming the Hour		A Time for Children		Bread		Worship Assistants	
February 4	Evan Spickard	February 4	Sharon Van Pelt	February 4	Ann Glosson	February 4	Kathy Linker
February 11	Colton Heavey	February 11	Joey Dulin	February 11	Jean Hager	February 11	Candice Shepard
February 18	Anna Talton	February 18	JD McNutt	February 18	Cathy Jewett	February 18	Emma Wakeman
February 25	Isabella Rockel	February 25	Tommy Heavey	February 25	Carol Lyerly	February 25	Gigi Hunnicutt

Infant Nursery		Toddler Nursery	
February 4	Alice Williams and Linda Clark	February 4	Mandy Williams
February 11	Kathy Dulin and Rebecca Murray	February 11	Traci Bird and Pam McCachren
February 18	Maggie Linker and Brenda Horton	February 18	Alisson and Aydenn Harris
February 25	Mandy Ide for Rose Baczewski	February 25	Scott, Dori and Jessica Swaringen

Ushers

- 1st Sunday:** Lead: Robin Hartsell, Butch McDonald, Ruth McDonald, Danny Tankersley, Jim Pharr, Patrick Spickard
- 2nd Sunday:** Lead: Ted Dickason, Dave Mowery, Thomas Linker, Bob Windell
- 3rd Sunday:** Lead: Chip Wells, Joey Dulin, Steve Jewett and Joe Novobilski, Dori Swaringen
- 4th Sunday:** Lead: Reggie Hunnicutt, Chris Bechtol, Dave Miller, Jimmy Stafford, King McCachren, Traci Bird

If anyone in the congregation falls ill, is injured, in the hospital or in need of pastoral care—WE WANT TO KNOW!
 Please call Pastor Neal directly on his cell phone (really—call his cell phone—he wants you to!)
 or call Cyndi Conway in the office so Neal can arrange to visit and offer assistance.

Pastor Neal: 910.280.9688/nealcarter64@gmail.com Church Office: 704.455.2479

Scripture Readings for the month of February

Thursday, February 1	Genesis 23:1-20 and John 6:60-71
Friday, February 2	Genesis 24:1-27 and John 7:1-13
Saturday, February 3	Genesis 24:28-38, 49-51 and John 7:14-36
Sunday, February 4	Genesis 24:50-67 and Mark 10:13-22
Monday, February 5	Genesis 25:19-34 and John 7:37-52
Tuesday, February 6	Genesis 26:1-6, 12-33 and 7:53-8:11
Wednesday, February 7	Genesis 27:1-29 and John 8:12-20
Thursday, February 8	Genesis 27:30-45 and John 8:21-32
Friday, February 9	Genesis 27:46 —28:4, 10-22 and John 8:33-47
Saturday, February 10	Genesis 29:1-20 and John 8:47-59
Sunday, February 11	Malachi 4:1-6 and Luke 9:18-27
Monday, February 12	Proverbs 27:1-6, 10-12 and John 18:15-18, 25-27
Tuesday, February 13	Proverbs 30:1-4, 24-33 and John 18:28-38
Wednesday, February 14	Amos 5:6-15 and Luke 18:9-14
Thursday, February 15	Habakkuk 3:1-10 (11-15) 16-18 and John 17:1-8
Friday, February 16	Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 and John 17:9-19
Saturday, February 17	Ezekiel 39:21-29 and John 17:20-26
Sunday, February 18	Daniel 9:3-10 and John 12:44-50
Monday, February 19	Genesis 37:1-11 and Mark 1:1-13
Tuesday, February 20	Genesis 37:12-24 and Mark 1:14-28
Wednesday, February 21	Genesis 37:25-36 and Mark 1:29-45
Thursday, February 22	Genesis 39:1-23 and Mark 2:1-12
Friday, February 23	Genesis 40:1-23 and Mark 2:13-22
Saturday, February 24	Genesis 41:1-13 and Mark 2:23—3:6
Sunday, February 25	Genesis 41:14-45 and John 5:19-24
Monday, February 26	Genesis 41:46-57 and Mark 3:7-19a
Tuesday, February 27	Genesis 42:1-17 and Mark 3:19b-35
Wednesday, February 28	Genesis 42:18-28 and Mark 4:1-20

2018 Stewardship Summary

2018 PROPOSED BUDGET: \$379,548			
NEEDED PER MONTH: \$31,629			
NEEDED PER WEEK: \$7,299			
WEEK	GIVING	DIFFERENCE FOR WEEK +/-	DIFFERENCE FOR MONTH +/-
1/7/2018	\$7,276	-\$23	-\$24,353
1/14/2018	\$5,303	-\$1,995	-\$19,050
1/21/2018	\$5,667	-\$1,632	-\$13,383
1/28/2018	\$5,821	-\$1,478	-\$7,562

Education Building

Loan as of 1/30/2018 **\$ 447,077** Minimum Monthly Payment \$ 5,110

Capital Campaign Established – The Session has taken action to create a Capital Campaign to retire our debt on the Fellowship Hall addition within two years. The team that will be working on this campaign is presently being formed and more information will be forthcoming in the coming days. We are excited about this action and look forward to the results of a successful campaign.

Church Life

Buildings and Grounds News

BUILDING AND GROUNDS: As the new year starts we have been busy evaluating all of our property and buildings and prioritizing the many projects that we plan to tackle this year. As you know, we are currently looking for anyone interested in helping us paint various locations around our campus. We have already had some response from all of you on this. Thank you Joe Novobilski, King McCachren and Jim Rockel for painting the infant nursery. If you are interested in helping with any of our painting projects please let Cyndi know. The cold weather always makes operating any facility a challenge. Thank you Joey Dulin and your team at Dulin Mechanical for your many trips to our facility during the cold snap to make sure our heat was on and thawing out a few frozen pipes. Our new shutters for the sanctuary have been ordered and we are expecting delivery in mid-March. Once they arrive we will be scheduling a few workdays to install these. If you are interested in helping with this, please let one of our committee members know. As always, if you have time or talents you would like to share, we are always looking for volunteers to join our committee. We meet the first Monday of each month at 6:30pm in the fellowship hall. If you can't make the meetings, just reach out to one of us.

Our committee meets the first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. and we welcome anyone who has an interest in maintaining and improving our buildings and grounds. **Our next meeting will be on February 5 at 6:30pm.**

Interested? Contact any member of the committee:

Billy Carriker, 980.521.5457/billy@reedycreeklandl.com

Jim Rockel, 319.850.1335/jlrockel@hotmail.com

Jim Pharr, 980-329-6225/jlpharr@aol.com

Prayer Requests

Please Keep in Your Prayers:

Neil Cochran; Amber Ritter, co-worker of Deb Carter; Kathleen Baczewski, mother of Joseph Baczewski; Joan Nicholson; Jeff Barbee; Harley and Teresa Vea, friends of Janet Little; Margaret Hale; Bob D'Ameilo, friend of Laura Milliken; Anna Melvin; The David Luther Family, friends of Vance and Brenda Horton; Shorty McCachren; Mandy Ide (recovering from surgery); Clai McNutt; Lavada Freeman; Priscilla Clough, friend of Alice Williams; Trina Hadfield Jones; Pat McDonald; Marie Hildreth; Bob Boswell, father of Dori Swaringen; Wes and Ree Abernathy; Benita Schirtzinger, mother of Darren Bird; Sam Peterson, friend of Priscilla Giuliano; Alan Cochran, brother of Neil Cochran; Ann Jones, daughter of Ray and Priscilla Clawson; Karen DeCarlo, co-worker of Alice Williams; Sonya Moorehead, friend of Jerry Clark; Lindy and Helene Linenberger; Kristine Way, co-worker of Alice Williams; Ouida Harman; Jim Busse, friend of Stephanie Campbell; Amy Hicks; Brendan Milliken; Seville Funk; Marlene Howard; Kay Nalbene; Jimmy McDonald; Linda Modzelesky; Bob Brombacher; Teresa Williams; Zackie Moore.



Scouting News

CHASE TIPTON'S EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

My Eagle Scout Project is to build raised beds for Thompson's Child and Family Services. This project will improve the garden teaching center by building and installing raised garden beds made from recycled shipping pallets. Donations are needed to purchase gardening soil to put in the beds and moisture blocking barrier for each bed. I appreciate any help you can give me! *Chase*

The scouts will also be having a campout at the end of the month which will be part of scouting for food. The Order of the Arrow (OA) is a part of scouts for those elected by members of the troop that have displayed scouting spirit. Troop 83 has active members in the OA, Caleb Watson is the 2018 lodge chief, Chase Tipton is lodge treasurer and Ben Watson is chapter chief. The troop was also in the top10 (2) in participation for 2017 in the lodge.

Scout Sunday - Feb 4th - Scout Sunday is always held on the Sunday before the birthday of the Boy Scouts of America on Feb. 8. The Scout Sunday tradition was started to make people in houses of worship aware of Scouting, and to allow Scouts to live out their "Duty to God" pledged each week.

The Scout Law says that a "Scout is Reverent" and the Scouts of all ages promise to do their "Duty to God". These values strengthen youth character in their family, community and faith. We look forward to having Troop 83 and Pack 83 help to lead us in worship with us on Scout Sunday.



Children



Children's News

from Sharon Vanpelt, Director of Christian Education
Teaching the Faith

Want to be a part of this fascinating and important ministry at Rocky River? Contact Sharon Vanpelt (dce@rockyriver.org) or Dave Mowery (davemowery55@gmail.com).

Children and The Lord's Supper

Participating in the Lord's Supper is a special way that children can feel a part of the church family. This is God's table, not our own, and all baptized members of the body of Christ are welcome to dine together. We know that even very young children can

understand that the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper are special times that can allow us to feel God's presence with us. None of us ever fully understands the mystery of the sacraments, but our understanding can mature with age and repetition.

Young children need to understand the bread and grape juice or wine as more than just a snack, but as spiritual food that helps us remember Jesus and try to live lives as Jesus would want. Just as our regular meals give us energy to run, play, work, and study, so this meal with our church family gives us energy to love and care for others and try to act in ways that reflect Jesus in our daily lives. Yet, this food and drink is not a magic pill in and of itself that makes us good or "worthy". Because it helps us remember Jesus, it helps us want to be better Christians for God.

As parents, you can help prepare your child each time the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated. Mention it in the car on the way to church. As you enter the sanctuary, point out the elements on the table and the place in the bulletin when the sacrament will be celebrated. This will give them time to think about the Lord's Supper and prepare themselves. Discuss it on the way home. Be aware of differing moods in various services of Holy Communion—Maundy Thursday is much different from Easter Sunday, for example.

How do I know that my child is ready for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? Here are some phrases to listen for to tell if your child is ready:

NOT READY

Can I have some today? I'm hungry!

Get a big piece so I can have some of yours.

Is this going to take long? I want to go home.

Not that again!

READY

Why can't I have some?

Can I have some of yours?

What are those people doing?

What are those silver dishes for?

RRPC provides an annual class with hands-on activities for young children (usually ages 6-8) to learn more about the sacraments, particularly the Lord's Supper. If your child is ready to learn more, look for information about a Spring class.

Each time we participate in the sacrament or study the Bible stories of people sharing this meal, we open ourselves to learn more about this special gift. Listen to your children's comments and questions and give your best answers. Read your Bible and talk with your church staff about questions you may have. Participate regularly in worship with your child and especially the sacraments. Be open to learning more about the sacraments yourself, perhaps in a Sunday School class or through discussion with family and friends.

Sacraments Education

Sacraments Education for children and families will be held Sunday, February 25th, 12:15 - 3:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. This is part of our church's educational process for children ages 6-8 who have not yet been through a First Communion class. During this time, children will learn about the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, exploring their aspects through hands-on activities and discussion. Participants are required to bring a parent or guardian with them to class. Lunch will be provided. For more information or to register for the class, please contact Sharon Vanpelt dce@rockyriver.org.

Godly Play Schedule for February

Please secure a substitute if you will not be present on your assigned date.

2018	Godly Play I (age 4-Gr 2) <i>Teacher/Doorkeeper</i>	Godly Play II (Gr. 3-5) <i>Teacher/Doorkeeper</i>
4-Feb	Jesus Feeds 5000	Parable of the Vine
	<i>Jane Talton/Beau Talton</i>	<i>Ashley Carriker/Rex Carriker</i>
11-Feb	The Transfiguration	The Transfiguration
	<i>Julie Alexander/Magan Bechtol</i>	<i>Sharon Vanpelt/Erica Heavey</i>
18-Feb	Lenten Cross	Faces of Easter 1
	<i>Erica Heavey/Mandy Ide</i>	<i>Janet Little/Dave Mowery</i>
25-Feb	Faces of Easter 1 & 2	Faces of Easter 2
	<i>Joey Dulin/Janet Little</i>	<i>Robin Hartsell/Niki Schneider</i>

Youth

Youth News

from JD McNutt, Youth Director

I'm excited! I hope you are too! I'm excited about what 2018 has in store for the youth. Mission trip to Kentucky. Local mission projects all throughout the spring. Possibility of events with Keeping the Hope kids at different points in the year. Big Fat Tie Competition. Lock-in at Charlotte Knights. You guys seem determined to make me shave my beard (yikes!). Ski trip. Ice skating. Arts in Worship. Bible Studies. Lots of great events to look forward to this spring!

Some of these things will be new for us this year. A few are traditional. A few are totally random. My prayer is that 2018 continues to be a year of growth for our youth group. So how can you help it grow stronger?

Above all be in prayer. Pray for each other and with each other. Be conscientious about inviting people to come join you at church. Speak up about your ideas for this is your youth group. And be mindful that wherever we go (mission, learning or fun projects) we are to spread God's love through how we treat each others and all people.

I'm excited! How will God work through RRPC youth next?

Peace,
 JD



Youth Calendar - Bible Study every Wednesday at 6:45pm after dinner

February (Big Fat Tie Competition)

February 4 - Youth vs Adult Football Game; 2 pm (Pharr Mill Rd field)

February 11 - Youth (Arts in worship 5pm; Youth 6 pm)

February 18 - Carillon and Ice Skating

February 24-25 - Ski Trip @ Winterplace

Confirmation

A new Confirmation class will begin the **first week of March for grades 8-9**. The class will be led by Neal Carter and Sharon Vanpelt, and it will be a time to explore the Christian faith and how we live out that faith as Presbyterians. Be on the lookout for more information regarding a quick meeting of participating families to determine class date and time.