

Covenant Church Newsletter
408 N Sacaton St, Suite K
Casa Grande, AZ 85122-4437
520-876-2888

www.covenantprescg.org email: office@covenantprescg.org

A Christ centered covenant community;

Loving God,
Loving People,
Making Disciples

October 2019

Pastor's Ponderings

It has become commonplace in both secular and religious news that Christianity is dying. The glee of secular society is matched by the gloom inside the church. In fact, most pastors and church leaders accept this as a given fact, and Christians in the pews whisper despairingly to one another.

But what if it's not true? In a book just out, Dr. Rick Richardson presents research suggesting that things are not as dark as they seem. Analyzing data from a survey commissioned by the Billy Graham Center in 2016 of 2000 unchurched Americans, Richardson's book, *You Found Me: New Research on How Unchurched Nones, Millennials, and Irreligious are Surprisingly Open to Christian Faith*, finds that many unchurched Americans think well of Christians and are open to engaging matters of faith. For example, 42 percent of the unchurched think that Christianity is good for society, 33 percent admire their Christian friends' faith, and up to 67 percent would be willing to attend a church event (depending on the type of event). Richardson concludes that the unchurched include a significant number of people who are open to being invited to visit a church. He also suggests that, contrary to the fear that tends to grip our hearts when we think about talking about our faith, it may turn out that we have something even better than we thought, something that our lonely and lost old world needs now more than ever, and is open to hearing about.

This is timely research, as we have been involved in a deep study of how to be a "conversion congregation," a church deeply and primarily focused on fulfilling the one job Jesus gave us to do, the making of disciples. And, starting in October, we will turn a page in that deep study and look at four particularly challenging questions we sometimes face in these conversations, based on Timothy Keller's book, *The Reason for God*:

On October 6 we will look at the question, "How Can There Be Only One True Religion?"

On October 13 we will consider, "How Could A Good God Allow Suffering?"

On October 20 we will ask, “Doesn’t A Biblical Faith Collide With Science?” (and on that same Sunday Rex Little will present another adult Christian education class on “Science in the Bible.”

And then on October 27th we will consider, “How Accurate Could The Bible Really Be?”

This is a great opportunity to invite family and friends, those special people in our life who may in fact be the ones asking these very questions. Please pray about who you can invite, and how you will approach them, as we prepare for the conversation of a lifetime!

Blessings,

Brant

FROM THE CLERK

Many people have been out travelling recently and we are excited to see them back safe and sound! Be sure to catch up on Pastor Brant’s messages that are posted on our website covenantprescg.org. He has been giving us some great lessons in how to reach out to others. Jesus directed each one of us to go out and share His good news with everyone.

September 29 is our 5th Sunday special mission offering for Habitat for Humanity. But if you miss out on the that date, you can still get a check to them any Sunday by noting on your check, “Habitat for Humanity.” And of course, plan to help with the construction planned to begin in November. If you can’t do the construction, maybe you could make some sandwiches to feed the workers. Share in the excitement of helping someone to have their own home who has truly turned their life around. More information to come!

Thanks to Elder Rex Little who continues to show us the amazing reality of scientific proof of the Bible’s accuracy and authenticity. These once a month classes are also a good opportunity to bring a friend to church.

Watch for Statements of Giving to be issued soon for donations through the 3rd quarter of the year. Make sure they match up with your records.

After bringing it before the church in August and giving it much thought and consideration, the Session has unanimously agreed to a modification of our church name. Going forward we will be called “Covenant Church.” We will still be Presbyterian and an ECO church, but we didn’t want to be confused with the denomination issues that led us to change to ECO. As a bonus, we won’t have to worry about misspelling “Presbyterian” as often!

Tina's Insights

Tina Hudson was a beloved former member, who for a while wrote devotional thoughts for the website. Over the coming months we will post her devotions in the newsletter...

Rolling grass, like a green carpet. Tall palms and Desert Willows. Golfers. On this side of the wrought iron fence, a hibiscus that has blooms twice as large as they should be. Petunias defying the weather with their pink and white petals. A covey of quail and a cottontail. I have enjoyed many views from my patios, but none quite like these. I've enjoyed sunflowers reaching to the sky and hummingbirds playing tag. Bougainvillea tumbling over a fence and jasmine enveloped in white blooms.

I've seen yellow daffodils and purple pansies as I gazed outward. But each view has been from my own home. First, with a husband and children; five to be exact. Lastly in a darling condo provided by a dear friend. Until the condo, I had never lived alone. I went from a teenager living with an aunt and uncle as I attended school, to a wife and mother. I always said first I was Daddy's girl, then I was Danny's girl. Then I was me. For years, my view had often been interrupted. That never happened when I was alone. My two little dogs would hop on to the lounge chair as I drank my coffee and had my quiet time. I would watch the birds, especially the hummingbirds and gaze at the flowers running along the back wall.

At our home on Laurel the song birds would serenade me and the hummers tease me with their funny little ticking sound. At the condo I could hear the song birds and hummers, as well as dogs barking and traffic as it moved past now and then. But I have a new view now. I would have preferred to let things remain the same. It is not easy to look at circumstances from a doctor's or your family's viewpoint. Being independent was important to me. On the other hand, not many people have a daughter and son-in-law willing to change their lifestyle to accommodate your presence. Not many daughters welcome a parent with a lovely room and make space for your "stuff" even if it means giving up their privacy and comfort.

So, what do you do when you find yourself facing a totally different view? Well, I found the answer this morning. "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus...examine everything carefully, hold fast to that which is good...Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it about" 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 23,24. Views are specific to where we are. They can also change day to day – watch the ocean as the waves roll in, one minute fierce and forceful, full of power, the next frothy and calm, silently creeping up the sand. How we see them can also change. I have laughed with joy as I watched birds bathing in the spray of the sprinkler. Other times I have wept with the beauty of my surroundings. Through the years there were times I had little choice as to my views. Then I began to think I was the one making decisions, in charge of my life. It took a new view to remind me how easily we take our eyes off Him who called us into His marvelous light. Our Lord knows what we need and when. How He chooses to provide it is His decision. How we choose to respond is ours. Faithful is He who calls you...wherever you are, enjoy the view.

Men's Bible Study

The men of the church meet at the church each Thursday at 11:00am, all men are welcome and you can bring a sack lunch if you like.

Neighborhood Help Team

The Neighborhood Help Team is continuing a service for those who could use a little bit of help. We would like to help you in replacing A/C filters or with some landscape trimming on the 4th Saturday of each month. Contact Nelson Moore in person or call him @ 520-483-0461.

Home of Hope Annual Chili Fest

Where: First Presbyterian Church, 702 E Cottonwood Lane. When: Friday, October 4th, doors open at 6:00pm, event begins at 6:30pm. Please RSVP: Jamianne at 520-709-1683 or email: hohpr@tcaz.org.

October Calendar

- 2 Prayer Night, 6:30pm at Carol & Wiley Smiths'
- 6 Communion
- 9 Prayers at the flagpole at McCartney Ranch Elementary, 7:15am
- 10 Worship Team meeting, 1:00pm
- 16 Prayer Night, 6:30pm at Carol & Wiley Smiths'
- 17 Session meeting, 6:00pm
- 20 Adult Sunday School after church, "Science in The Bible"

October Birthdays

- 17 Jaden Childers

October Anniversaries

- 2 Chet & Barbara Dorsey
- 22 Rex & Janine Little