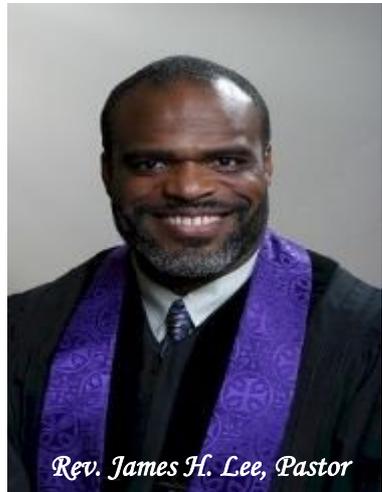
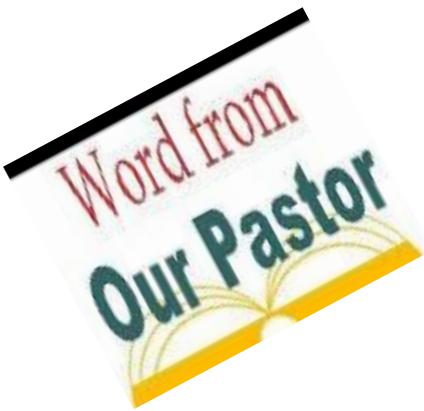


May 1, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Rev. James H. Lee, Pastor

Dear NCFA Family and Friends:

Please know that I have joyfully placed you and your family in the hands of our Lord through prayer. I know that you are already in the hands of the Lord and that no one or nothing can pluck you out of God's hands or separate you from God's love. However, as your pastor, I feel called to care for you as an under-shepherd of the Good Shepherd.

As I prayed about you, the folks in Nepal, and everything associated with Baltimore, I thanked God for you and our church. We have remained a community of faith through very trying times, and we have worked through issues in an authentic way. Thank you. In the spirit of Dave Ramsey, whose resources we use to help equip and empower our families to live economically liberated lives, we can try to “live like no one else, (so) later (we) can live like no one else.” We have the capacity to see the myriad of forces surrounding the events without turning a blind eye because of our theology, ideology, politics, civic duty, morality, media preference, age, or ethnicity. According to Ephesians 6: 10-13, 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

On a more pleasant note, it has been a joy to hear feedback from the class that the Rev. Jeff Saddington has been teaching on the Gospel of Mark. Elder Caly Fernández has been leading a small group of our middle school-aged girls in a class which not only addresses their spirituality but also care of their bodies.

We express our appreciation of Naomi, who faithfully *served as one of the caregivers in our Nursery and also as a Deacon, as she takes a leap of faith and moves to another city. Pray for her journey and care.*

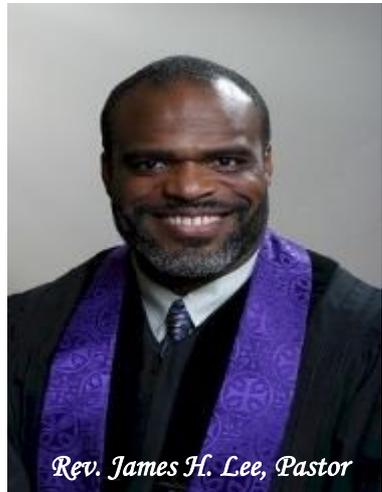
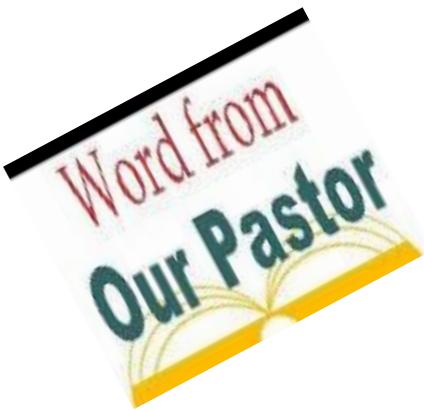
- * We celebrate with seminarian Christine Wagner, who recently became a candidate under the care of the Presbytery of Northern Kansas.
- * I thank you for the ways in which you supported the family members of Jane and Stacie. Your support of them and me is greatly appreciated. There were a number of people who have made donations to NCFA in honor of Jane and Stacie. On May 24th, we are going to expand the definition of our memorial celebration and dedication to include loved ones who have served faithfully on this side of glory and those who have entered the Church Triumphant. The Rev. Dr. C.D. Weaver has made his "Good Shepherd Cross" available and affordable for us to dedicate on the 24th. To God be the glory for our loved ones; those who loved them; and people like CD who share their gifts and blessings with others.

May 1, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Rev. James H. Lee, Pastor

Please pray for traveling grace and mercy for Pastor Lydia, Elder Caly, and Seminarian Christine, who are traveling to the Dilley Family Detention Center on Saturday with a large number of Presbyterians from Mission Presbytery to encourage changes to the current broken system.

Lift up prayers also for Shane Blackshear, who will preach at the 8:15am worship in the Chapel this Sunday, and the Rev. Bill Harris, who will preach at the 10:15am worship at Wilshire. I will not be present for worship at either service. I am accepting care from you and the members of our Session. I don't anticipate attending "Pillowside Presbyterian," but if I do.....

I encourage the women of the church to participate in our 2nd annual Mother's Day Tea at 11am on Saturday, May 9th, at the Mojicas' home. You will find more information in the newsletter and on Sunday's slides, or feel free to contact Elder Mary Mojica for more information: maryjomojica@yahoo.com. Please plan to join us for worship on Mother's Day, May 10th, when the Rev. Trish Holland will preach at the Chapel, and I will preach at Wilshire.

I encourage you to make plans to also attend the commencement service for our seminarians who are graduating on May 24th at 2:00pm in the sanctuary of University Presbyterian Church. I look forward to attending the Board of Trustees meeting when we affirm the recommendation of President Ted Wardlaw and confer Master of Divinity degrees to John Harrison, Sam Okyere Mireku, and Jacqueline Williams.

As we continue to transition through the end of the school year, please avail yourself of our Vacation Bible School (VBS) the week of June 14th and concluding on Father's Day, Sunday, June 21st. Also this year, Children & Youth are planning a one-day art day celebration in mid-July.

God bless and keep you all. I pray these words bless you:

1 Corinthians 1:4-9 : 4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, 6 even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

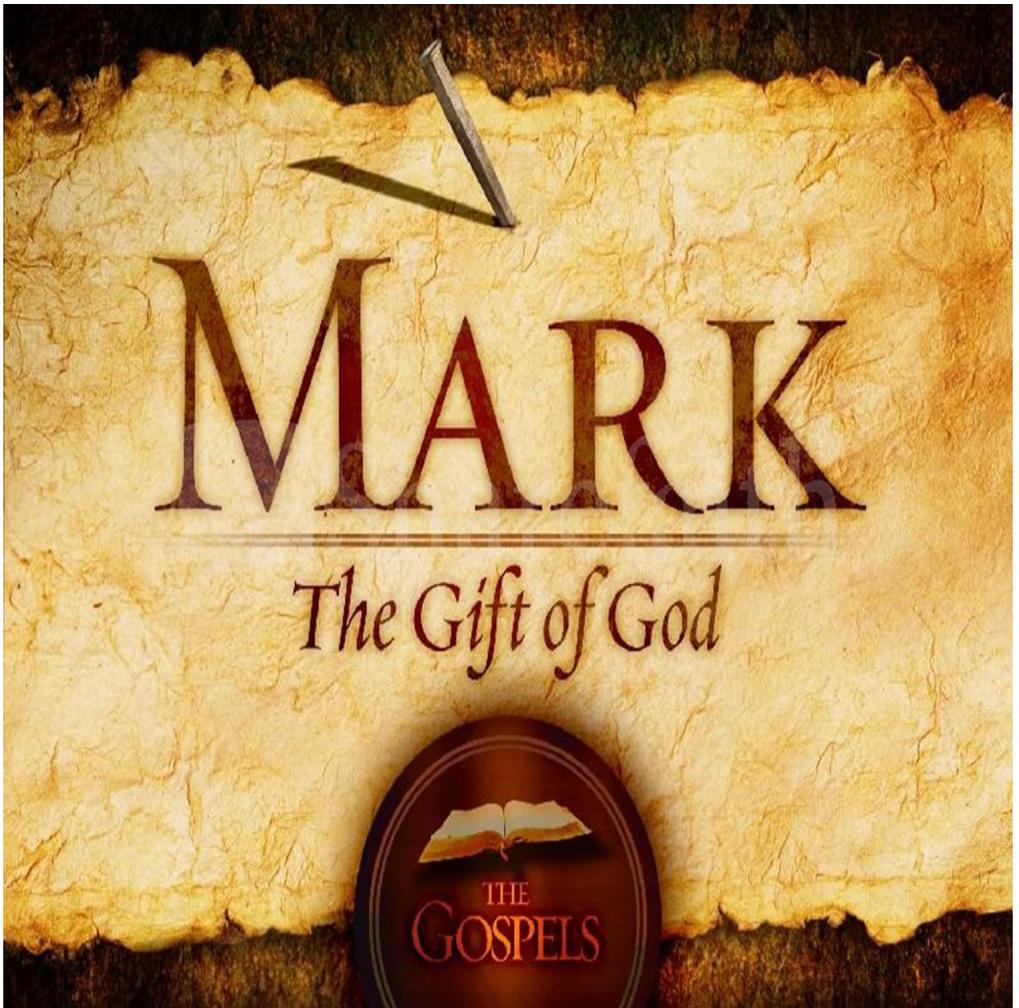
James H. Lee



May 1, 2015



Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Rev. Jeff Saddington is leading a 6-class series on the Gospel of Mark. This week we will read Mark Chapters 11-14 in preparation for next Thursday's study, 7-8pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Dates: May 7th and 14th.

Light snacks provided. Please feel welcome to join the fast-moving conversation on some fast-moving Scriptures!

Presbyterian Women

***May 12, Tuesday Annual PW Spring Luncheon,
10:00 AM-1:00 PM,
Covenant Presbyterian Church, FEB 200.
NCF ladies invited to attend.***

May 1, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



- 4th Anayah Mojica
- 5th Said Bohn-Hall
- 10th Dexter Lee, Sr.
- 11th Placid Unegbu
Dana Williams
- 13th Mallorie Munoz
- 16th Caly Fernandez
Kathryn Aldas
- 17th Luke Oglesby
- 20th Fortune Unegbu
- 21st Philippe (Jimmy) Bohn
Robert Booth
- 26th Lillie Daniels
Dexter Lee, Jr. (DJ)
Margaret Spinks
- 28th Alex Hernandez
- 31st Pam Nemir
Cathy Trifiro
Janet Masters

Session Members

- *Rev. James Lee
Pastor/Moderator
- *Elder Kathy Smith
Clerk of Session
- *Rev. Bill Harris
Administration & Personnel
- *Elder Tim Lenz
Buildings & Grounds
- *Elder Mary Jo Mojica
Congregational Life
- *Elder Randy Mojica
Children and Youth
- *Elder Cathy Angell
Discipleship & Women's Ministry
- *Elder Caly Fernandez
Evangelism
- *Elder Tracey Lenz
Finance & Stewardship
- *Elder Robert Booth
Lay Ministry
- *Elder Benton Hooks
Men's Ministry
- *Elder Vernon Bailey
Missions
- *Elder Charles Robinson
Worship & Membership

Deacons

- Connie Jones, Chair
- Kathryn Aldas
- Ulysses Cox
- Naomi Jones
- Samuel Okyere Mireku
- Lucy Oglesby
- Ashley Phillips
- Carol Saddington
- Cathy Trifiro
- Roxann Vallejo

MAY 2015



- 5th 6:30pm Men's Ministry
Dinner, Study at 7pm
- 6th 6:30pm Meal and Meeting
- 7th 12noon Bible Study at
Connie Jones's home
- 7-8pm A Study of the Gospel
of Mark (Ch. 11-14) -
Fellowship Hall
- 9th 11-1pm
Mother's Day Celebration –
High Tea at the Mojicas' home.
Come if you are a mother!
Come if you are a daughter! Come!
RSVP Elder Mary Mojica,
maryjomojica@yahoo.com
- 10th Sixth Sunday of Easter
(Mother's Day)
8:15am Waller Creek Chapel
Rev. Trish Holland,
9-10am Adult Sunday School
10:15am Worship at
1507 Wilshire Blvd.
Pastor Lee, preaching
Sunday School –
K-5th during Worship
- 19th New Beginnings Gathering
6:30pm Light Meal
7:00pm Meeting with
Consultant

May 1, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

You are cordially invited to our 2nd annual

Mother-Daughter Tea

Join us Saturday, May 9th, from 11am to 1pm for High Tea and Treats at the Mojica Home. This will be a time of sharing each other's company and pouring out our hearts while pouring our tea!

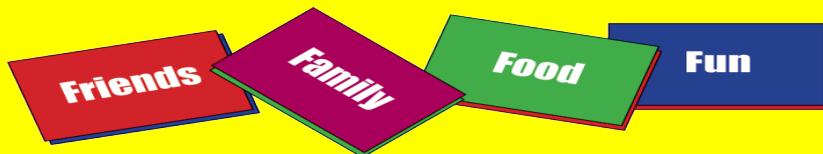
You are encouraged to invite ANY mother or daughter you know!

Address: 9006 Magic Mountain Ln., Round Rock, TX 78681

RSVP: maryjomojica@yahoo.com.

If you'd like to volunteer, share teapots & supplies, or help in any way, please contact Mary Mojica.

***Saturday, May 9th from 11am to 1pm
Sharing stories and affirming biological mothers,
aspiring mothers, and spiritual mothers.***



Dear Special Seminarians, Pastors, and Friends,

We know that all seminarians are working very hard now at the midpoint of the semester, and so Carol and I want to invite you to a

**Reading Week Kick-Off Buffet
at our home on Monday, May 11, 2015 at 5-7pm**

We are so grateful for the many ways you have graced us at New Covenant Fellowship. Please feel welcome to bring significant others and children. You will be served comfort food that will propel you through your studies for the finals you face!

Do let us know if you can come so we know how many Legos to bring out and food to prepare for you.

Blessings on you in these weeks ahead!

Love, Jeff and Carol

May 1, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

NCFA

SUNDAY MORNINGS

NCFA Sunday Schedule

8:15am - Worship Service
Waller Creek Chapel
41st St. and Red River

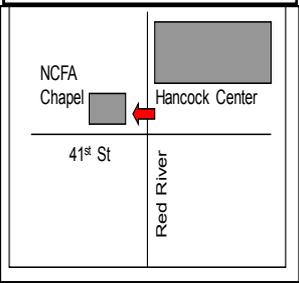
10:15am - Worship Service
1507 Wilshire Blvd.
9am Adult Sunday School
10am Fellowship
10:45am - Children's Church

**NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 8:15am --
Waller Chapel**

Come rise and shine with us
at our **8:15am** chapel service
where we glorify God
through the Word, Prayer, Hymns,
and Communion.

41st and Red River, entrance gate on 41st.

In the words of Phillips, Craig & Dean,
"Come, just as you are, to worship."
All are welcome to this traditional,
intimate style of worshipping our Lord.



NCFA Waller Creek Chapel — Upcoming Preachers

May 3— *Shane Blackshear*

May 10 - *Rev. Trish Holland*

May 24 — *Rev. Jeff Saddington*

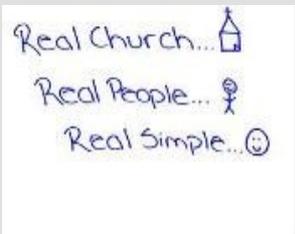
Prayerfully seeking a musician called to join this worship service.

NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 10:15am

We would love to have you and your family
come share in the CELEBRATION OF
THE GOOD NEWS!



We are worshipping in the Fellowship Hall of
Genesis Presbyterian Church on the
Wilshire Campus starting at 10:15 a.m.



New Covenant Fellowship of Austin PC(U.S.A.) is a
racially diverse community informed by the Bible,
empowered by the Holy Spirit, and motivated to share
God's love with all. In response to God's love, we are
called to equip disciples to faithfully serve, to encour-
age seekers to joyfully commit, and to implore all to
worship our Lord, as we love our neighbors,
grow in grace, and live by faith.

JOIN US IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE GOOD NEWS

May 1, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



ARE YOU A MUSICIAN?? A pianist? A guitarist? A soloist?

Our 8:15 am service at the NCFA Chapel on the Perry Estate 4100 Red River is in need of a musician now, as Carol has retired from playing the piano at the early service. (She will continue to accompany the 10:15 service).

If you can help, or know someone who might be able to, please contact Trish Holland, 512-461-6250 cell

"You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things."

- Mother Teresa

Four areas of FOCUS for 2015

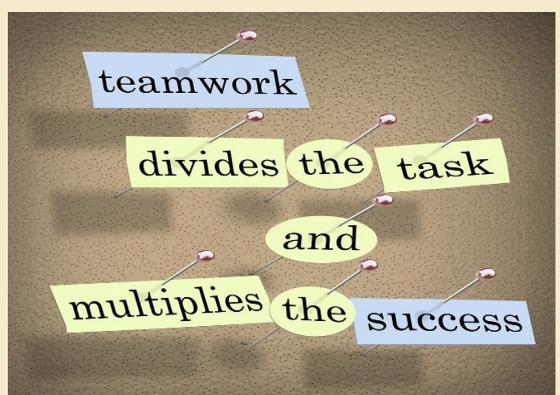
1. Retain and minister to visitors and members through personal contacts, strengthening families, ministry-driven events, and identifying and utilizing the numerous gifts of our members.

2. Better utilize social media and other modes of communication to celebrate our ministry, share resources, and organize ourselves.

3. Enhance our Children and Youth ministries through mentoring, attending their extracurricular activities, utilizing their gifts in worship, and assisting in the Nursery and Church School.

4. Continue emphasizing Marketplace Ministry and celebrating the various ministries within our church and community.

Continue to reach out into the community like the Community Garden and our



NCFA CONNE**X**ION!

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PRAYER AND PRAISE

**FAITH and PRAYER
both are invisible,
but they make
impossible things
possible.!!!**

Get More Quotes @ thedailyquotes.com

- ⇒ PRAISE FOR TODAY’S BAPTISM AND THE WITNESS OF GOD’S GRACE AND A PERSON’S STRENGTH AND FAITH JOURNEY.
- ⇒ PRAISE GOD FOR THE BOOK OF ORDER CELEBRATING BAPTISM BY WAY OF IMMERSION, POURING OUT, AND “SPRINKLING.” THANK GOD WE ARE CALLED AND CLAIMED IN OUR BAPTISMS.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR TWO NEW MEMBERS JOINING NCF.
- ⇒ LIFT UP WILLING VOICES AND MUSICIANS FOR THE MUSIC MINISTRY. LIFT UP WILLING HANDS TO HELP WITH BUILDING AND GROUNDS UPKEEP AND WORSHIP PREPARATION.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR NIKKIE GIVING THE CHILDREN’S SERMON; AND FOR LARA’S INTERPRETIVE DANCE OF THE 23RD PSALM.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR THE NCF FOOD PANTRY ESTABLISHED BY THE DEACONS. THE FOOD IS AVAILABLE FOR NCF MEMBERS TO TAKE HOME FOR THEIR OWN USE OR FOR SOMEONE THEY KNOW IN NEED.
- ⇒ LIFT UP KATIE AS SHE GRIEVES THE RECENT DEATH OF HER GRANDMOTHER.
- ⇒ LIFT UP FAMILY AND FRIENDS GRIEVING JANE’S DEATH.
- ⇒ LIFT UP TRAVELING MERCIES FOR OLIVER AS HE GOES TO DALLAS FOR A PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP.
- ⇒ LIFT UP GOOD NEWS FOR MEMBER’S APPOINTMENT. LIFT UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR HER CHILDREN. PRAISE FOR THE CARE AND SUPPORT OF NCF; SPECIAL APPRECIATION FOR TRISH AND PASTOR LEE.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN WORSHIP, SINGING, AND HELPING WITH COMMUNION.
- ⇒ LIFT UP PREPARATIONS AND TRAVELING MERCIES FOR TIM AND TRACEY’S ANNUAL ROCKPORT GET-AWAY.



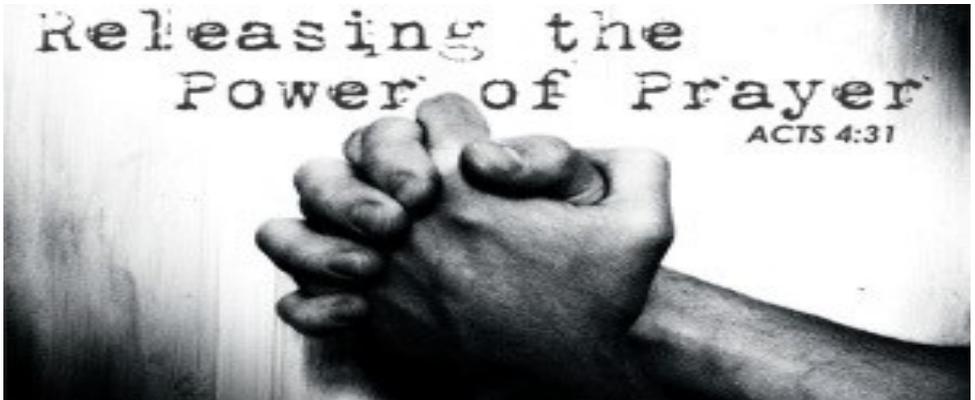
May 1, 2015



NCFA CONNE^XION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

PRAYER AND PRAISE



- ⇒ LIFT UP SAFETY AND LOVING CARE FOR LEE AS HE BEGINS ATTENDING DAY CARE. LIFT UP A POSSIBLE FUTURE ENROLLMENT IN A CENTER THAT WOULD BE MORE ADVANTAGEOUS.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR NIKKIE AND CHARLES STEPPING UP TO SING WITH PASTOR BILL.
- ⇒ LIFT UP CALY, LYDIA, AND OTHERS AS THEY TRAVEL TO DILEY, TEXAS TO EFFECT CHANGE IN THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF FAMILY RETENTION CENTERS BEING OPERATED FOR CENTRAL AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS.
- ⇒ A HUGE NCF WELCOME TO BECCA'S (OUR FORMER SEMINARY INTERN) NEW DAUGHTER.
- ⇒ LIFT UP 4 YEAR OLD JUMARCUS WHO WILL HAVE HIS TONSILS AND ADENOIDS REMOVED THIS WEEK IN WACO.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR PASTOR LEE'S SERMON. IF YOU ATTENDED THE CHAPEL SERVICE ALSO, YOU WERE DOUBLY BLESSED TO HEAR SAM O. PREACH ON THE SAME GOSPEL PASSAGE.
- ⇒ LIFT UP THE PERSON(S) WHO BROKE INTO VERNON AND DORIS'S HOUSE THIS PAST FRIDAY. MAY THEY COME TO KNOW THE LORD AND RECOGNIZE THE WRONG THEY HAVE DONE.
- ⇒ PRAISE FOR SAUL'S 8TH BIRTHDAY.
- ⇒ LIFT UP MATTHEW AND FELLOW SEMINARIANS AS THE END OF THE SEMESTER APPROACHES WITH ALL ITS DEADLINES AND PRESSURES. LIFT UP GRACE AND MERCY FOR THEIR LOVING FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO SUPPORT THEM THROUGH IT ALL.



May 1, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

**A tisket, a tasket,
we've got a brand-new basket!**

DEACON FOOD PANTRY

All are welcome to participate in our

FOOD PANTRY,

a crisis ministry initiative of the NCF Deacons.

UNEXPIRED NONPERISHABLES WELCOME.

Each month a suggestion will be made, as below,

and it is only a suggestion, as variety continues to be "the spice of life"!

A basket will be available as you enter church this Sunday.

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL REQUEST IS FOR:

SOUP AND CRACKERS



+



=

"Love Thy Neighbor"

May 1, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

More Than a Name: Love and Action"
Acts 4:5-12; John 10:11-18
Rev. James H. Lee
New Covenant Fellowship of Austin
April 26, 2015—4th Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:5-12 5The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, 6with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. 7When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, ‘By what power or by what name did you do this?’ 8Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders, 9if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, 10let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. 11This Jesus is “the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.” 12There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.’

John 10:11-18 11“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. 14I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. 16I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. 18No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

This has definitely been a full day and a blessed day! I am so thankful for all that has transpired, including the time of a baptism, the singing of the 23rd Psalm, and the ways in which Nikkie taught our young people about the very names of God and then leading our Time with Children in that; and what a blessing for me seeing Lara embody that 23rd Psalm—Amen?!

“More Than a Name....” As we look in Acts, and Doug set it up perfectly, we hear that a miracle has taken place; and as a result of the miracle, we have disciples who were in prison, and then they went out to give an account of what took place. And as they gave the account, they lifted up the cornerstone.

Cornerstone:

The one that those who were the religious leaders, those who were building the foundation of faith, rejected. Cornerstone. When you leave today, I want you to see outside, right by the cross, the cornerstone for this church and the fellowship hall that was established. Jesus is our cornerstone. When I say that, as those who are Christians, those who have identified themselves with him as Lord and Savior, he is our cornerstone.

And whereas the religious leaders were looking to them and asking, “How is it that you did this thing?” they said, “Well, if you’re asking how did this good deed take place, this good deed took place as a result of Jesus the Christ.” It is His name Yeshua, the one who saves; it is His name Yeshua, the one who delivers. Yeshua, Jesus, it is by this name that this miracle took place and by which salvation is given to all. Cornerstone. Christ.

Christ is not his last name—Christ, who is the Anointed One, the Messiah, the one foretold from the beginning and even will be that in the end. So every now and again you’ll hear me call Christ Jesus instead of Jesus Christ because I want to recognize him as being the Anointed One, the Messiah, our Lord, and our God.

Characteristics/Character:

And so we hear different names. Another name we hear coming out of the Gospel lesson is that of a Good Shepherd. And that piece was illustrated so well again through the choir and through the Time with Children. A shepherd is one that will lead; a shepherd is one that will protect; a shepherd is one that will provide; a shepherd is one that knows the sheep. All those are the characteristics of a shepherd.

May 1, 2015



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What is important is that not only does the shepherd know the sheep—the sheep know the Shepherd. Any “Baaahs” in here know the Lord? Yes, that's an important thing because it's not about religion. It's about a relationship. You see, if you just come and join the church and participate in a church because it's the status quo thing, you're missing the mark. I don't care what the denomination, I don't care what you pay, and I don't care what you do; you need to have a relationship with the One who loves you and called you into creation. Those are the characteristics of this shepherd.

We'll also know that this shepherd whose characteristic is of providing would also later be known as a lamb. And isn't it something that a shepherd who is called to lead also has identified himself with those that he is called to lead? Isaiah 53 says that like a sheep or lamb before the slaughter, he is there to give up his life for us and doesn't say a word. If it were me, I'd be fighting back: Uh-uh, no way, not today! But not our Lord and Savior. Those are his characteristics.

There's a saying that “You will know someone's character when times get tough.” Yes, your character really comes out. You have certain qualities and characteristics that really show up when everything is great. We can all do the right thing, say the right thing, “Please” and “Thank you.” But when times get tough, what will you do? Jesus says, “I am the Good Shepherd. I'm not like a hired hand. I'm not like a hireling.” You see, the character of the hireling is revealed when times get tough. When times get tough, the hireling jets. Why? Because the hireling doesn't care about the sheep. Ah, but the good shepherd does. The Good Shepherd's character is revealed, and his character is the same way as its characteristics: “I'll lead you by the still waters. I'll lead you in those places where you can find nourishment.”

Care:

And what we need to know also is that in the time of Jesus, there weren't a whole lot of green pastures out there. And so those shepherds kept the flock because they could use the wool as a way for provisions. So they kept the sheep for a long time. And so it was a personal thing with those sheep. The shepherd cared. The hireling doesn't care, but the shepherd cares. Do you know that the Lord cares for you? You see, if you were to lead a sheep by the water, it would drink, drink, drink; and if the waters were rough, it would drink, drink, drink, and then get caught up in the current and drown, drown, drown! Do you know that if there were green pastures, the sheep would just eat, and eat, and keep eating unless you move it along the way and say, “That's enough now,” and take it on in its path? You see, even a good thing can be a bad thing. Every now and then, our appetites get us. And I'm not just talking about what we want to eat. Our appetites get us, and the Lord has to move us along the way so that those things in our lives don't become lords and overtake us. He remains the Lord of our lives because he cares for us. He cares.

Even sometimes when God calls those that we love home, it's because God cares. Because God is our keeper on this side of glory and on the other side of glory. Sometimes we look at that calling home as punishment, and it's not. It's time for rest and time for reward. It's time for a renewed body to be experienced and time for rejoicing. He cares. How do you know he cares?? Because he gave his life so that death and the grave would not have victory, so that the sting would not have an everlasting effect. He cares. Our Shepherd cares.

So I was walking through all of this and saying, “God, You called me to be an under-shepherd because no one can take the place of the Shepherd.” And I was struggling, and God was like, “Well, now you know how I feel about you and yours.” And there was a tendency to say, “I don't want to care because it hurts.” And He says, “Now you know how I feel about you.” I say, “But God, you don't always let me know.” He says, “You get a chance to know as relationships come and as relationships go, and you have to hold those that you love in your heart. I journey with them from the beginning of life on Earth and even in my realm where I am, I care.”

May 1, 2015



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April 26, 2015—4th Sunday of Easter

Even sometimes when God calls those that we love home, it's because God cares. Because God is our keeper on this side of glory and on the other side of glory. Sometimes we look at that calling home as punishment, and it's not. It's time for rest and time for reward. It's time for a renewed body to be experienced and time for rejoicing. He cares. How do you know he cares?? Because he gave his life so that death and the grave would not have victory, so that the sting would not have an everlasting effect. He cares. Our Shepherd cares.

So I was walking through all of this and saying, "God, You called me to be an under-shepherd because no one can take the place of the Shepherd." And I was struggling, and God was like, "Well, now you know how I feel about you and yours." And there was a tendency to say, "I don't want to care because it hurts." And He says, "Now you know how I feel about you." I say, "But God, you don't always let me know." He says, "You get a chance to know as relationships come and as relationships go, and you have to hold those that you love in your heart. I journey with them from the beginning of life on Earth and even in my realm where I am, I care." The Good Shepherd. He lays down his life to protect us. And there would be a place where the imagery is that when you finally got to a place where you needed to have the shepherd rest, the shepherd would lay down in a sense so that the sheep wouldn't go around the shepherd; the shepherd being there would guard the way like a gate. Anything that went over was a thief.

I know in these days we struggle hearing about Jesus being the only one by whom salvation is granted, and I'm not trying to get in the way of ecumenism or pluralism. I'm trying to say if you are a Christian, we recognize Christ as being our Lord and our Savior and let God do what God does. But right here, this is the only way I know. Because he gave his life. He got up.

Control:

He loves me because I lay down my life and I pick it back up again. It's not control to say "I'm going to manipulate you, I won't let you have life, won't let you have fun." It's to say that "I am in control." There is a path. There is a plan and it is being fulfilled; so you can have confidence to keep on living. Why? Because when I can't control anything, God does control it, and he controls it through Christ.

He loves me because I lay down my whole life, and I pick it up again. And so I want you to trust him. And if you're like me, when your heart gets broken, and your world gets rocked, and you want to say "I don't want to care anymore," call on the Lord. Experience God's compassion and consolation. Compassion, consolation. He says, "These are my sheep of this flock, and I have some others who belong to me, but they haven't come on in there." I love that because if it were up to us, we'd say, "This is my team. This is my game. This is my group, and forget the rest of y'all." But he says, "They may not have yet said "Yes," but they still belong to me. Isn't that good news? He has compassion to allow us to get to that place where we can choose to say "Yes." Amen.

And so as I end the sermon, I want us to be reminded again and again and again of the Commission. When he sent out his disciples in the beginning, he said, "I send you out two by two," and he said, "I send you as sheep among wolves." What do we see in the text in John? Some wolves. I need us to be aware there are some wolves out there; and wolves don't want your best good—but God does. So I need us to be trusting in this God who cares for us, in the Shepherd who will lead us and guide us. You may not fully comprehend everything, but what you do understand, choose to trust in, choose to trust in. More than just a name. Cornerstone—established, hasn't changed, still the same. Characteristics of one who will protect, provide, lead, guide. That's the one we want to trust in. Times get tough, won't jet like a hireling, but will remain faithful. He cares. Peter says, "Cast your cares upon the Lord because He cares." That's what I had to do when I didn't want to care anymore.

May 1, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

More Than a Name: Love and Action"
Acts 4:5-12; John 10:11-18
Rev. James H. Lee
New Covenant Fellowship of Austin
April 26, 2015—4th Sunday of Easter

I want you all to know I may not go to your homes for dinner. I may not always email you or call you. But I keep you and your family in my prayers because you are the flock that the Lord has given me. Thank God we have a group who can do better than I can, but just know, from your babies to your grandbabies to your parents, your in-laws, I care. But I can't do it like the shepherd does.

We're about to go to Communion, and Communion is made possible because that is a way for us to remember that he cared and he cares for us, and that a cleansing has taken place. Though our sins were red or crimson, he has cleansed us as if we've done no wrong.

Let us pray:

Our Lord and our God, how we worship you and praise you for who you are. We love you for your creative ways in which you express that—through trees, the birds, the flowers, through songs, through our bodies, through your word, and through Christ Jesus our Lord. I played with words today, but the Word of God remains the same. Continue to speak it into us, that we might have confidence in it when we find ourselves in the valley of the shadow of death so that we will know that you are there and that you are the one who leads us. We hear it in the text, but we would know that the steps, the paths of Godly ones are ordered by you, our Lord. Continue to lead us, guide us through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

We Care Kits

NCFA Family and Friends: Thank you for your support of our ministry. Thank you for investing in the "We Care Kits." We pray that your sharing of the kits is a blessing to the recipients. We pray that you feel equipped to represent the hands, feet, and heart of our Lord, as you share the kits with others.

We are Blessed to be a Blessing!"



"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

But do this with gentleness and respect." 1 Peter 3:15

May 1, 2015



Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

1 John 3:1-7
Samuel Dhyere Mirchu
New Covenant Fellowship of Austin
- Chapel Service
April 26, 2015—4th Sunday of Easter

Dearly beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, the theme for our sermon this morning is “*Christ, Our Good Shepherd.*” The Bible in several instances uses the word “sheep” or “flock” when making reference to church members or the assembly of God’s people. The New Testament, for example, has records about “the lost sheep” and the “good shepherd” as parables that Jesus used to teach his disciples.

Sometimes people wonder why there are other kinds of animals who may be stronger and intelligent than the sheep, yet they are not used to represent human beings in the scripture. Rather, it is always the sheep, the sheep, and the sheep.

Looking at some of the characteristics of the sheep, we realize it is not completely out of place that the sheep is used to represent God’s people in the scripture. Like the sheep:

- We sometimes become restless;
- We sometimes go astray;
- We sometimes even lose focus and direction in life.

In their unsaved and deprived minds, human beings can be like the sheep that are sometimes weak and deficient in wisdom. Our weakness and deficiency require that we have a good shepherd.

The “good shepherd” and the “lost sheep parables” that Jesus told in the Gospel demonstrate the love of Christ for the people he calls his own. In the priestly prayer of our Lord and Master Jesus, as recorded in ***John 17:20***, he prays for his own sheep and remembers the “other sheep” as well. It is the wish of Christ who is the head of the Christian Church that every sheep is brought into the fold, so that when he speaks as a Shepherd, all the sheep can hear his voice at once.

People of God, Christ is our Good Shepherd, and this truth always stands. His character and attitude towards us, his relationship and interactions with us are such that no one can doubt that indeed he is a Good Shepherd.

Beloved, Christ the Good Shepherd knows the sheep he watches over; he lays down his life for them. In fact, no one but he alone owns the sheep. The sheep listen to his voice because they know him. One interesting characteristic of this good shepherd is that apart from knowing the sheep that are in the fold, he also knows those outside who have gone astray.

The beauty, handsomeness, and majesty of the Good Shepherd, not forgetting his moral uprightness, make him an emphatic Good Shepherd of all times to his sheep.

Christ by his sacrificial death on the cross makes him the only Savior of humanity and of course the Good Shepherd of humanity.

Christ, who is the cornerstone of all buildings, demonstrates by his grace, love, and mercy towards us that indeed he is a Good Shepherd.

Though humanity rejected Jesus Christ, the authority that God gave to him by raising him from the dead put him in a very important position or place to be our Good Shepherd.

Precious One, if Christ and Christ alone is our Good Shepherd:

- What is in our lives that bears testimony to the fact that we the flock hear the voice of the Good Shepherd whenever he speaks to us?
- What does Christ our Good Shepherd say about the truth and what does he do in our lives to show that indeed he really loves us?
- What do we learn from the nature of the Good Shepherd, especially his love and concern for the sheep that are even outside the pen?
- Does it challenge you and me, who consider ourselves to be all ready, are already in the pen? Does it make us act with love and compassion, so that those outside can come in to taste and enjoy the love of the Good Shepherd?

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To demonstrate that yes, indeed, we hear the voice of Christ, our Good Shepherd, we must show concern and love for the other sheep that are still outside the pen and have gone astray. It is the wish and desire of our loving Good Shepherd that they come in, so that there wouldn't be any situation where there is "the sheep of Christ" on one side and "others" on another side. He wants to ensure that the two receive equal attention where he would eventually have only one flock.

Precious one, what are you doing and what am I doing to help make this desire of the Good Shepherd come true? We all have a duty to perform. We must reach out to the Sheep who are outside the church and bring them in, for our Good Shepherd has need and concern for them. ***Acts 20:18*** says: ***"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the Church of God, which he bought with His own blood."***

Again, ***John 10:16*** also tells us what Christ the Good Shepherd says. ***"I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd."***

Thanks be to God that we have Christ as our Good Shepherd. Let's keep watch over others and ourselves as well, for the glory of God and His Son Jesus Christ, who is our Good Shepherd.

Amen.



May 1, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



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