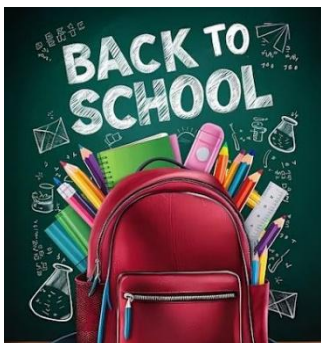




The Center Chronicles

August 2026



On Saturday, August 1, the youth program will be having their second yard sale to raise money for the Christmas Food Tote ministry. In addition there will be backpacks for kids who are returning to school. We will be passing out 50 filled backpacks for kids as they get ready for school. As the youth begin their new school year, they are facing a growing influence from a secular culture that is seeking to reshape “faith, identity, and truth” which compliments worldly values and at the same time compromises Godly values. Though young people have more access to information via the internet and the growing A.I. industry, many are struggling to creatively process their personal thoughts. Ironically, though social media invites opportunities for young people to connect to online groups, they are having difficulty befriending and relating to one another face to face. In fact, there are some young people so connected to their phones and at the same time feel so disconnected being in the presence of others. Cyber bullying and peer pressure has expanded through apps like snap chat and tik tok.

Add to that those who are growing up in broken, dysfunctional family situations, we have many young people going through an identity crisis of sorts, not knowing who they are or what they want to do with their lives, short of being a Youtube celebrity.

As God’s people what can we do? Proverbs 22:6 tells us to **“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”** As parents and as a church family, we have a responsibility to love our kids as Christ Jesus loves us. We are also called to set boundaries for our kids to both protect them from others as well as to protect them from themselves.

Second, we read in Proverbs 23:13, we read, **“Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die. Punish them with the rod and save them from death.”** Discipline is a necessary part of growing up because it helps clarify what right and what is wrong. In fact, Proverbs 29:17, teaches, **“Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire.”** Even now as adults, God convicts, corrects, and disciplines us because God loves us and wants us to become the person God created us to be. Proverbs 3:11-12 states, **“My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves the one he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.”**

Third, We are to teach our children the importance of faith. We are to remind them of that Proverb truth where it is written, **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”**

As parents and as a church family, these Proverbial truths along with other Gospel truths can equip and prepare our kids for the new school year. As we pray for our children, let us also

pray for the teachers who have responded to God's call to teach and help us prepare our kids for life. It doesn't matter if your kids go to public, private schools or are being home schooled, all kids are facing the same challenges and temptations. As teachers do their part as they do their part to teach our kids what they need to succeed in this new school year, they face the challenges of the classroom and what is required of them. I know they would appreciate the encouragement, prayers, and support as they also begin this new year with new students and classes.

Blessings,
Jon



Communion to be celebrated August 2

Sunday, August 2, we will be celebrating communion during the worship hour. When we break bread and share the cup, it becomes a time of reflection, remembrance, and restoration.



Pastor to do two baptisms at Sweetwater Church

The pastor will be leaving soon after worship on **August 2** to go to Sweetwater church to participate in the sacrament of Baptism for two children after their worship service. Then on **Sunday, August 16**, Ed Graves will be baptized at the baptismal pool at Poplar Bluff Baptist Church.

These sacraments are a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, which God made with us in Christ..... The children of

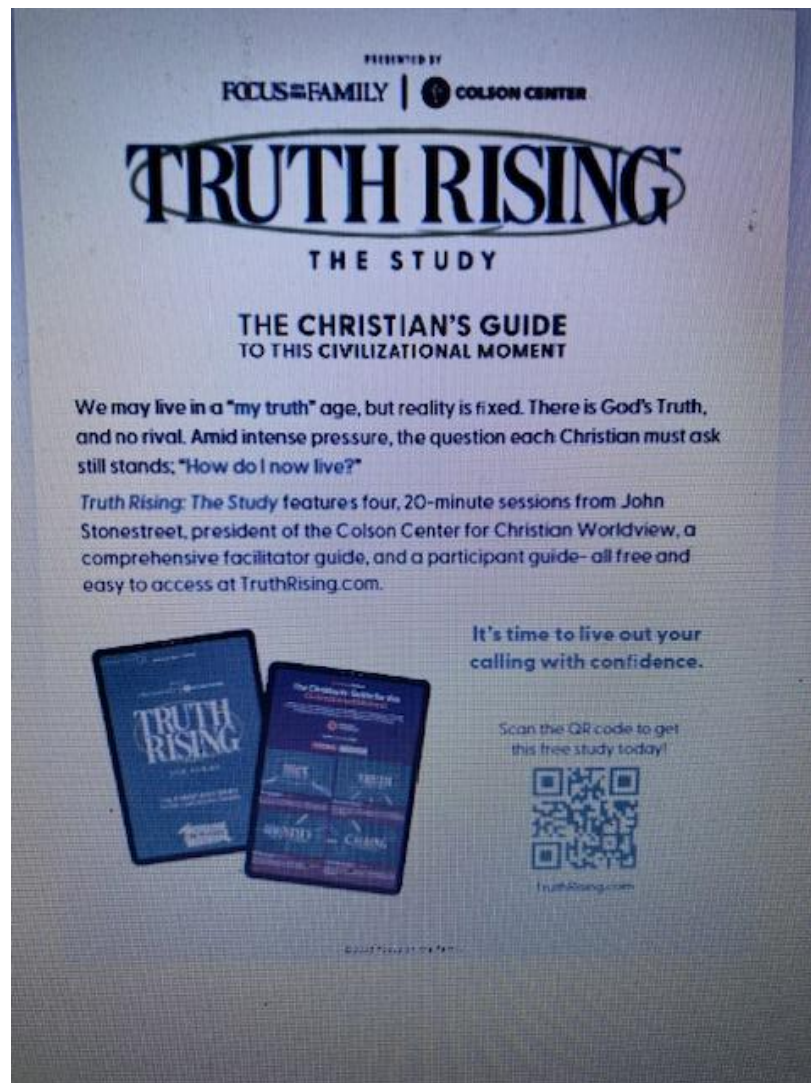
Christian parents, though they may not understand these things, are within the covenant and belong to the life of the church. Christ claims them as his own, calling to them saying: "Let the little children come unto me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God." (Mark 10: 14). The parents and congregation makes promises to love, raise, and teach each child so that he/she may come to make their own profession of Faith... For those who choose not a baptize their children as infants and for adults who were not baptized as infants, when they profess their faith in Christ and accept Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior, they too are encouraged and invited to be baptized. For Presbyterians, the sacrament of Baptism can be experienced in one of three ways. It is important to realize that no amount of water used cleanses you from sin, but God uses water amount of water available to symbolize what the Holy Spirit has already done in the life of a new believer. The Presbyterian Church encourages one of three possible ways to be Baptized. The first follows the tradition of Cornelius in **Acts 10: 47-48**, whom were baptized with what they had in their home. Tradition says water was either sprinkled or poured on those new believers. The third follows the tradition demonstrated by Jesus's baptism at the Jordan (**Luke 3: 21, Mark 1:9, Matthew 3: 13-16**) or Lydia and her whole household (**Acts**

16:15) were immersed in a river. But again, it is not the water that saved them, rather the water symbolized what the Holy Spirit had already transformed their heart because of their newly found faith in Christ Jesus. One thing for certain, Presbyterians believe in one baptism only. They accept and receive all believers who have been baptized (sprinkled, poured, immersed) in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)



Elementary and High School Youth Meetings

As schools begin a new year, so do the challenges that face our youth. Therefore, beginning **August 9- September 20** on Each Sunday night, the pastor and volunteers want to invite **Elementary Youth** to meet at 4:30- 5:30 pm and **High School Youth** to meet from 6-7pm. We are looking at doing a study from Focus on the family and the Colson Center called **Truth Rising**. Truth Rising: The Study is built around four key themes—**Hope, Truth, Identity, and Calling** which the pastor believes are things our young people need at this point in their lives. We invite parents to watch the promotional presentation that is attached in this newsletter. Click on the QR code to watch the presentation and download materials.





Church Session Monthly Meeting- August 20 @6pm

The Elders will meet for the monthly meeting on Thursday, August 20 @ 6pm. Each month, the session discusses the Treasurer's Report and the six areas of ministry at Center Church: Worship, Christian Education, Mission, Building and Grounds, and Hospitality.



Church Softball Team sign up

An invitation is going out to anyone who would like to play on the Church's softball team. We are joining with the Tabernacle church and are going to call ourselves the Presbycostals ball team. The roster is limited to 20 players, so sign up now. The cost to play is \$15.

Back to School Prayer

Dear God,

As we send our children back to school, we pray for Your protection and guidance. Keep them safe from harm, both physically and emotionally. Help them to find friends who will support and encourage them. Give them wisdom as they face challenging situations. And help them to always remember that You are with them, no matter what.

We also pray for our teachers and school staff. Give them strength, patience, and knowledge as they work with our kids each day. Help them to be role models of Your love and grace. And bless them with all the resources they need to provide a top-quality education for our children.

Finally, we pray for all the parents out there who are sending their kids back to school. May we find comfort in knowing that You are holding them all in the palm of Your hand. And may we trust that, despite any challenges that come our way, You will always be with us and see us through.

