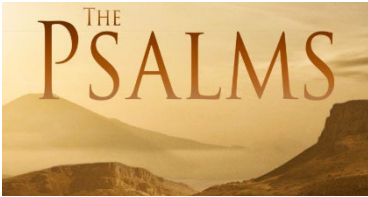




The Center Chronicles

May 2024



Gordon MacDonald writes, “In the fall of 1956, I began my final year at the Stony Brook School, then a boys' college preparatory school in New York. Among the required courses that last year was *Senior Bible*, taught by the school's headmaster, Dr. Frank E. Gaebelein, a man who required us to memorize 300 verses of Scripture over the course of that year.

One of the passages he had to memorize was **Psalm 46** which reads in part, “**God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, ³though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging..... The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress..... He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; He breaks the bow and shatters the spear, He burns the shields with fire. Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth....”**

MacDonald then writes, “56 years have passed. A few days ago my doctor called me. "Gordon, I have some difficult news for you. There's a tumor in the back of your head in the lining of the brain. It is not malignant, but it will have to come out." I have spent my whole life helping other people face doctor-call moments like these. Now it was my turn and the very first thing that began to surge through my mind was: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble period. Therefore, will not we fear, though the earth be removed...." Because of Dr. Gaebelein and Psalm 46, I was able to face this health challenge without fear.

So what is your favorite Psalm passage? For many it is Psalm 23. For those in these mountains, it might be Psalm 121. For those blessed with the birth of a child or grandchild, it might be Psalm 139. For those who love to worship God, it might be Psalm 150.

The Psalms, the largest collection of verses in Scripture. Melinda Cousins points out, “The Psalms were written throughout the entire period of Old Testament history, from the time of Moses (Ps 90) through to the exile nearly a thousand years later (Ps 137).” Broken down into five separate books, the Psalms were written by at least 7 different people or groups whom God would use to become God’s mouthpiece. Theologian John Calvin shares, “That any emotion a human being has ever felt can be found in the Psalms.” Psalmist use words to describe what happens when we are in awe of God’s creation, might and power. There are Psalms that:

- describe those times when we feel separated from God and subject to the persecution in the world.
- identify what we are feeling in times of discouragement and distress.
- remind us of the importance to meditate on the goodness of God’s Word.
- comfort us, encourage us and remind us that God created us in our mother’s womb and set us apart for a purpose before we breathed our first breath.

Over the summer I invite you to join me as we take time to study one section of the Psalms recorded in the 5th book known as the **Psalm of Ascents**. They begin from Psalm 120- 134 and were basically Pilgrimage Psalms that were quoted and sung as God’s people literally “went up” to Jerusalem to worship God at the Temple during the three major Jewish festivals: Passover, Pentecost, and Booths (Exodus 23:14-17) The pilgrimage meant taking time out of daily lives to reconnect with God. So this summer, we are going to take a spiritual pilgrimage to sing, share, and study the Psalms. Come and see how these Psalms can touch our hearts as we continue to travel the faith journeys of our lives.

Blessings,
Jon

P.S. Attached is a chart to help you better understand the different Psalms.

PSALMS

The Prayer for God’s People

BOOK 1 (41 Psalms)	BOOK 2 (31 Psalms)	BOOK 3 (17 Psalms)	BOOK 4 (17 Psalms)	BOOK 5 (44 Psalms)
Reflects Genesis: Creation & Man	Reflects Exodus: Deliverance & Redemption	Reflects Leviticus: Sacrifice & Worship	Reflects Numbers: Man’s Sin & God’s Faithfulness	Reflects Deuteronomy: God’s Word and God’s Praise
1-41	42-72	73-89	90-106	107-150
<p>More than seven authors composed the Psalms over a thousand-year period (ca. 1450—430 BC)</p> <p>AUTHORS: King David (73), The Sons of Korah (12), Asaph (12), King Solomon (2), Moses (1), Heman the Ezrahite (1), Ethan the Ezrahite (1), Anonymous (48)</p>				
<p>PURPOSES: <i>Worship, Praise, Instruction, Lament, Prayer, Meditation</i></p>				
<p>CHARACTER: <i>edgy & honest; passionate; full of faith; instructive and directive; exalted view of God</i></p>				
<p>“Most of the Scriptures speak to us, but the Psalms speak for us.” —Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373 AD)</p>				
<p>KEY WORDS: “How long?” (20x) “Trust” (50x) “Bless/Blessed” (111x) “Praise” (136x)</p>				
<p>PREDICTIONS OF THE MESSIAH: 2:7; 8:6; 16:10; 22:1, 7-8, 16, 18; 34:20; 35:11, 19; 40:7-8; 41:9; 45:6; 68:18; 69:9, 21; 109:4, 8; 110:1, 4; 118:22, 26</p>				
<p>MESSAGE: We will worship and trust God for all He is, and all He has done, while we wait for the Messiah</p>				

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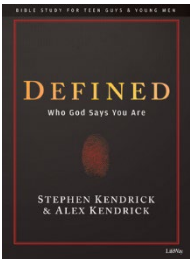


Andrew Bivens and Carolyn Montgomery Wedding

We celebrate **May 11** at the day God is calling Andrew Bivens and Carolyn Montgomery to become one in marriage. The wedding is at the First United Methodist Church in Madisonville at **10am**.

A New Sunday School Class begins April 7

A new Sunday School class will start on Sunday, April 7 in the Fellowship Hall at 9:15am. All young people, ages 9-16 are invited to join Philip Bivens as he focuses on who we are as defined by God. He is using Stephen and Alex Kendrick book, Defined Who God Says You Are as a guide in this study which will be given out in class.



WordGo Bible Study

YOU are invited to join us for Bible Study on the final night Jesus was with his disciples before being arrested and going to the cross. Our focus on is on **Gospel of John, chapters 13-17 concluding with his personal High Priestly prayer for himself, his disciples and us.** We meet on Wednesday nights from 6:30- 7:30pm in the adult Sunday School room.



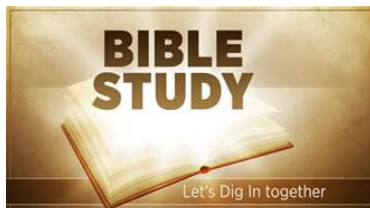
Dorcas Ministry meets every first and third Wednesday at 9:30am

The Dorcas Ministry is a vital ministry of Center Church. It is exciting to hear that this ministry has grown in number. There are countless stories of how their quilts have comforted and ministered to those in need. For more information, please contact Sandra Black at 423-253-3876.

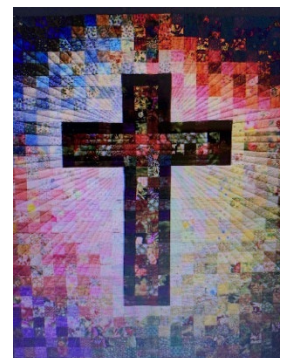


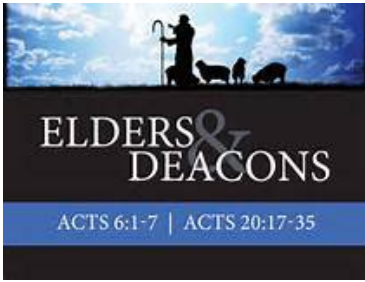
Men's Bible Study meets Saturday mornings at 9am

All men are invited to join us on Saturday at 9am as we continue to study the Gospel of John.



This month our focus will be the final three days of Jesus life and ministry recorded from John 18- 20





Deacons and Elders are scheduled to meet on May 16 at 5pm (Deacons) and 6pm for the Session.

Congratulations to our Graduates!



Lucas Pilkey graduates from Tennessee Wesleyan with a master's degree in education.

Hailee Warren graduates from Tellico Plains High School and will be going to Tennessee Wesleyan in Athens.

Annalynn Bivens graduates from kindergarten



Class
OF
2024



Youth Fund Raising Event

Everyone is invited to a cookout by the youth on **May 19** following worship. There will be a cookout and some game activities to burn those calories. All funds will be used for this year's Youth retreat in Pigeon Forge.

