



The Center Chronicles



May 2026



As we began our study of Philippians on Wednesday night, I was reminded how God started that church in Acts 16. According to Scripture that as “Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region..... having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.” In other words, God’s Spirit was dictating and directing Paul and his mission team to pass through the provinces of

Asia to the region of Macedonia until they arrived at Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. Then on a Sabbath, Paul and his team went outside the city gates to find a place to pray. It was there that the Holy Spirit led him to meet Lydia from Thyatira, who lived in Philippi to market her “purple cloth” which was a much wanted commodity in the textile world of her day. Lydia was a Gentile, business woman who was also a “worshipper of God.” The Scriptures tell us that “The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.

When Holy Spirit gave Paul the words to share, Lydia’s life would be forever changed. When she accepted the truth that Paul proclaimed, we read that **“she and all of her household were baptized....”** She wanted her family, her kids, her servants to have what Christ had given her which is model of a Godly mom. Through her, the church in Philippi was established and I can assume with confidence that Lydia became the Matriarch of that new congregation.

“Matriarchs are the heart and guiding force of families, embodying strength, wisdom, and enduring influence.” Add this definition to a relationship with Christ, you have a Godly mother who loves all under her care, a prayer warrior who lifts before the Lord those she loves, and compassionate provider who strives to take care of those under her care. When I think of Matriarchs, I think of Maude Lester Smith who took me in as a young college graduate to begin learning how to do ministry in her church of 5 members. I think of Roberta Childress who faithfully served the Lord as a daughter of a minister, a wife of a minister, raised her kids to do ministry and established her own ministry in the process whether it be playing the organ, going to visit church members, or inviting others to experience the love of Christ at Center Church.

I think of mothers and grandmothers who sacrifice so much to hold families together through love, hugs, and the power of prayer. As someone once said, **“A matriarch is the heartbeat of her family, keeping rhythm even when the world tries to throw her off beat.”** So be sure to take time to give God thanks for the moms and matriarchs in your life and know that God used them to bring you and me into the world to fulfill the purpose God planned for our lives.

Happy Mother’s Day,

Jon



For transplants who have moved into the area, you are invited to go and have an Appalachian culinary experience at the **Tellico Plains Community Center on Saturday, May 9, 11am- 2pm**. Ramps, in simplest terms, are wild mountain onions. They are one of the first things to “pop up” in the forest with the coming of spring. They’re found on the east side of hills, and grow in little patches. Nutritionally, ramps contain vitamin C, vitamin A, chromium, and selenium. It is said that ramps also contain organosulfur compounds that have been shown to have cancer-fighting properties. Ramps will be mixed with eggs, fried potatoes, and pinto beans.



Presbytery Meeting, May 12 Washington Presbyterian Church

The pastor will be attending the quarterly Presbytery meeting and making a presentation about Center Church and the Shelter My Sheep Ministry.



Cupcakes and Conversations

Stacy Lynn invites you to join her as she presents a research based on demand driven approach to education.

When: Saturday, May 16, 2026

Time: 12- 2pm

Where: Tellico Plains Community Center



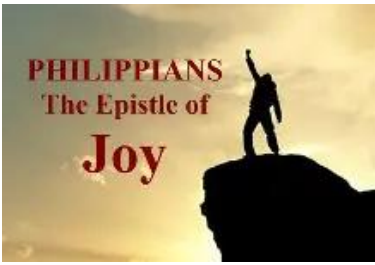
Children's bell practice on Wednesday's at 5:30pm

The kids are doing a remarkable job learning to read music notes and playing on time. Thanks to Becky Stone and her helpers as they instill in our kids a musical gift, they can use to glorify God.



Thanks to those who came and showed support for FCA Impact dinner

FCA area director, Ben Porttorff, present a great informational program on April 13 and after a great dinner, we heard testimonies from local coaches (Rev. Roman Hamilton) and students (Sweetwater athlete) and UT football running back, Desean Bishop. We gave support for FCA to continue its ministry in the schools of Loudon, Monroe, and McMinn County. If you want to be more involved, please contact Ben at 502-548-3654 or bpottorff@fca.org



Wednesday Night Bible Study @ 5:30pm

Join us as we begin a study on the Joy letter of Paul known as Philippians. We are using the Wordgo Bible Study app and sharing our answers with one another. Come and join us and be filled with joy.



Monthly Session Meeting

A regular scheduled Session meeting is set for **Thursday, May 21 at 6pm.**



Water walk success at the zoo

As we began our journey carrying empty buckets for almost a mile and a half, we then filled our buckets and carried them another mile to help us understand what so many do around the world to get water for their families. As we walked, we passed the gorillas, the chimps, the giraffes, the rhinos and the seven (7) foot tall ostriches. Thanks to the support of Center Church, we joined over 300 other people who came to



walk for water. Because of your support, we were in the top 5 giving teams with Eleanor Grace being honored as the individual who raised the most for Water Mission. Great job team!



. Pastor will be on vacation May 25-31

The pastor will be taking time to spend with his family **May 25-31**. We will be out of town for the week. The Front Porch Pickers will be leading worship on Sunday May 31.



Youth News- Study on the Armor of God

On Sunday nights at 4:30, the youth have been learning what it means to put on the armor of God. All youth are encouraged to come and join us as we study Ephesians 6:10- 20

A Memorial Day Prayer for Our Military and Military Families

Heavenly Father, Today is Yours. We thank You for giving us this beautiful opportunity to honor the men and women who so bravely served this country in the past as well as in the present. Father, we ask You to bless and strengthen those brave souls who selflessly give of themselves without asking anything in return. We ask You to heal our wounded warriors who returned home in pain after they gave their all for this great land. Bless them. Restore their souls. Heal their bodies. Bring salvation to the lost.

Father, we ask You to bless the families of our military who stay behind while their loved one goes into battle. Keep them safe and provide for their needs according to Your abundance. Lord, we pray for a special blessing upon the families whose loved one gave his or her life to this country. Keep them safe and comfort their hearts.

Lord, we ask You to anoint our Chaplains and others who bring the Word to our military. Bless their ministry and bring a great harvest of souls from their efforts. Father, we ask You to forgive the sins of this nation as well as the sins of the leaders who have forgotten how to pray. Have mercy on all Americans and bring us to a state of repentance in these difficult times. We ask You to forgive our pride as a nation and deliver us from the evil that has come upon us. You alone are righteous and holy. You alone are worthy of praise. We thank You for hearing our prayer! In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen

(From Beliefnet.com)