

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE MIDLANDS

Unapologetically Christian, Unapologetically Progressive

Pastor's Paragraphs

MOVING TO A HIGHER LEVEL

One of my former church members in North Carolina who usually follows what is happening at CCM gave me a call last week. He had just finished reading our July newsletter containing the announcement of our exciting new series, SPIRITUAL VALUES/SECULAR ISSUES, in which we will be seeking to apply relevant spiritual wisdom to some vital contemporary concerns in a way that enables us to avoid the perils of partisan politics and the unnecessary bellicosity that frequently attends the resulting divisions. I wish I could be there," he said, "because you're doing something special." "Oh?" I replied. "Yes," he continued. "You are moving your people to a higher level!"

To move us to a higher level is indeed my goal. Our new series is for people who are intentional about their Christianity, who want to move beyond mere church attendance, who want, in an era with more than its share of darkness, to move toward the light. It is for people who sincerely want to move our nation and ourselves toward healing and wholeness. I believe that lofty goal can be achieved only when we pay attention to and follow divine guidance, beginning with the 3,000-year-old and later spiritual values that are our heritage from devout prophets and, particularly, from the brilliant mind and sensitive heart of Jesus. It appears that God has not left us without guidance in any era; and, fortunately, that spiritual GPS is ours for the taking.

In our first session, we had a wonderful group of people who listened with rapt attention, then added their own sage comments, as well. The spiritual values that we discussed helped us to see that we are not alone in dealing with many of the experiences of daily life. When our session was over, I heard one person remark, "Powerful, powerful!" And another indicated that our time together provided an "a-bah moment" for him. So, it seems that we are off to a good start with a great group of people who take their spiritual journey seriously as, together, we seek to "move to a higher level."

Actually, there is a biblical passage that can serve as a splendid source of motivation for all of us. In fact, I used it as my text in a recent sermon: If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, seek my face and turn from their dysfunctional ways, I will HEAL their land!

As you ponder your own response to God's call as well as the exceptional promise of healing for ourselves and our nation, please remember: I love and believe in you.

Warmly, your pastor and friend,
John

IT'S HAPPENING AT CCM

August, 2017

Please Note: Our fellowship will gather for worship and spiritual growth on the second and fourth Sunday in September.

Sunday, August 13 (2^od Sunday of the Month) 10:00 a.m. WORSHIP

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The results of several surveys over time indicate that most presumably well-informed church members claim to believe the basic teachings of their chosen fellowship. However, in the same surveys, it was discovered that the majority of church members did not know the meaning of even the most familiar words so often used in their church's teachings: words such as salvation, born again, eternal life, Son of God Son of man, and others. Some individuals thought they knew what those terms mean, but, amazingly, the definitions they gave tended largely to be inaccurate. They were startled!

We won't be checking the knowledge of our own members and friends today, so breathe easily! Instead, our pastor will take one of the most frequently used words in various churches and unpack its meaning for us-a meaning that people in many churches will never have an opportunity to hear. Also, he will clarify the meaning of a number of the frequently used additional words mentioned in the preceding paragraph. John's sermon for this morning is entitled "SALVATION: WHAT THE HECK DOES THAT

MEAN?" The message and our informal discussion following worship should be both stimulating and enlightening. (Out by about 12 noon)

Sunday, August 27 (4th Sunday of the Month) 10:00 a.m. EDUCATION

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According to scriptural wisdom, it is impossible to be a good Christian without also being a good citizen! Jesus himself made that clear: "Render to God that which is God's and to the government what belongs to the government." In other words, if we choose to be an authentic follower of Jesus, we will take our responsibility as a citizen seriously; but we also will take our relationship to God seriously by utilizing spiritual values to guide us in our decisions and actions as citizens. Since many people who take their relationship to God seriously don't know how to relate spiritual values to the big issues that face us, that is why we have begun our new, cutting edge series, SPIRITUAL VALUES/SECULAR ISSUES. It is intended to point us in a helpful direction.

In our first session, we addressed the issue of whether, from a spiritual standpoint, big or small government should be a primary concern. Today, we'll be talking about what spiritual wisdom has to say about money--our attitude toward it, how we get it, and how we use it. We could call this session "biblical economics"-well before there was such a thing as modern economics. But the ancient biblical perspective is surprisingly relevant and helpful for the issues we face today.

John's presentation and our group discussion should be extremely helpful for making personal decisions and acting wisely upon them. (Out between 11:30 a.m. and 12 noon)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CARING

ARE YOU A CAREGIVER?

If you are a caregiver or know someone who is, this information may be of help to you. AARP is sponsoring what is billed as "a free and fun event for family caregivers" called CAREVERSATIONS. There will be a gathering on August 12th and another on August 20th, 2017, here in Columbia from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., with a break for lunch and a second session from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. The Saturday, August 12th meeting will be held in the Wachovia Room of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (8301 Parklane Road); and the Sunday, August 20th group will take place in the Multipurpose Room at Edisto Discovery Park (1914 Wiley Street). Complimentary parking is available on-site at both locations.

To reserve a seat, simply call 1-800-278-1045 or register online at aarp.cvent.com/carecolb. If you need respite services, contact the National Respite Locator at archrespite.org.

Here's an additional plus-factor: Attendees can enter for a chance to win a Spa Gift Card.

KNOWN BIRTHDAYS

Be sure to wish a happy birthday to Bob Wilson (8/11), Bill Stacey (8/21), and the Reverend Inez Register (8/28).

PLEASE SUPPORT IN PRAYER AND GRATITUDE THE FOLLOWING WONDERFUL PEOPLE.

Some of the following individuals are experiencing challenges, others are celebrating positive occurrences, and others are

having a combination of both. Let us share life with them as we lift them up to God in prayer.

Anita Baker

Dr. Saba Damien

Margaret Davis

Dr. Carl Evans

Dr. Norman Masters

Dr. Deborah Rosen

The Rev. Dale & Norma Sessions

Jim Shapiro Betty Sullivan

LOOKING AHEAD

A few of you have indicated that you misplaced a former newsletter that listed dates of our upcoming CCM gatherings from September through December; so, we're happy to make that information available to you again.

- September 10 (2nd Sunday of the Month) - WORSHIP: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
- SUNDAY September 24 (4th Sunday of the Month)-ENLIGHTENMENT (EDUCATION)
- October 8 (2nd Sunday of the Month)- WORSHIP: REFORMATION
- SUNDAY October 22 (4th Sunday of the Month) - ENLIGHTENMENT (EDUCATION)
- November 12 (2nd Sunday of the Month)- ENLIGHTENMENT (EDUCATION)

- November 19 (PLEASE NOTE: 3rd Sunday of the Month) - THANKSGIVING WORSHIP
- December 10 (2nd Sunday of the Month)-ENLIGHTENMENT (EDUCATION)
- December 17 (PLEASE NOTE: 3rd Sunday of the Month) - CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Since a number of our members and friends traditionally are out of town during Christmas week, we will have our Christmas Worship and Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony the week before Christmas this year so that those dear people can be with us for our special seasonal celebration.

Our pastor, Dr. John Whatley

CCM:

KEEPING THE DOOR OPEN FOR THE HOLY

*WHEREVER YOU ARE, THE DIFFERENCE
IS WORTH ANY DISTANCE!*

Our Telephone:

Senior Pastor: (803) 331-9999. Our mobile cell phone is more reliable than our landline phone, because it is on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If no one answers, it usually means that our pastor is in a meeting, in a counseling session, doing regular spiritual mentoring, or is involved in some other form of ministry; but he will return your call as soon as possible, so please be sure to leave a message.

Our Websites:

CommunityChurchMidlands.com (Also .net, .info and .org)
or

CommunityChurchOfTheMidlands.com (Also .net, .info and .org)

Our Mailing Address: P.O. Box 6946, Columbia, S.C. 29260-6946

Our Location: CCM usually gathers on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month, and any changes will be noted in our monthly newsletter. Please join us at the gorgeous Seven Oaks Community Center in beautiful Seven Oaks Park, 200 Leisure Lane (between St. Andrews and Piney Grove roads, just off I-26 West). When you enter the spacious parking lot, you'll see the main entrance to our newly renovated building on your right. Once you are inside the Reception Area, our meeting locality is on your left. For updates on our programming, to verify meeting times, to learn about changes in scheduling, or for any pastoral need, please feel free to call 331-9999, night or day.

ALWAYS, WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!