

FOOTPRINTS



Volume 8, Issue 5
May, 2022

WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER!



LIVING PROOF

The days following the resurrection of Jesus were filled with rumors, conspiracy theories, and surprise visits by the One who was supposed to be dead. If Jesus decided to appear to His disciples only, there would not be much thought about whether it really happened or the disciples were making this up. After all, desperate times call for desperate measures!

However, Jesus chose to wait and visit those who were not as well known before seeing the 11.

This shows that everybody was worthy of an encounter with Jesus as long as they were looking for him. It also shows that this is not a conspiracy. Jesus is living proof that God's plan to save the world worked! Now it is our turn to build the church on the foundation of the Gospel.

I
JESUS
LORD

I love our church!
Earl Winfrey
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Please keep us informed of any
address changes so we can
keep our records up to date.

What Kind of Church is First Christian Church?

First Christian Church is a non-denominational Elders-led Church located in Greenwood, SC. We are part of the movement to restore the simplicity of New Testament Christianity. We believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God, that He lived a sinless life, offered His life for ours on the Cross, and rose on the third day to live forever. We believe that salvation comes through simple obedience to the plan of salvation that is laid out in the pages of the New Testament.



Core Beliefs

A common misconception is that all churches believe and preach the same thing. Unfortunately that isn't the case. In a world that is greatly divided spiritually it is very important to know just exactly what a church believes and practices. We welcome the opportunity to sit with you and discuss these core beliefs in depth.

We believe...

1. That Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God who died for our sins and arose from the dead. **1 Corinthians 15:1-8**
2. That the Bible is the inspired Word of God - "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path".
2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105
3. That every person has worth as a creation of God but "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" **Romans 3:23**
4. That forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life are available to those who trust and obey Christ as Savior and Lord. **John 3:16**
5. That we are saved by grace through faith in Christ. **Ephesians 2:8-9**
6. That the Church is the body of Christ on earth and exists to save the lost and edify the saved.
Ephesians 4:1-16
7. That Jesus Christ will one day return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. **1 Thes 4:13-18**
8. That those accepting Christ must repent of sin, confess their faith and be baptized into Him.
Romans 10:9, Acts 2:38

For more information about baptism, see our Baptism FAQ located on our website

Biblical Foundation

Like most people I know, I love a buffet! Just walking into the room where there is food from wall to wall is what I consider to be a little slice of heaven. Taking my plate and filling it with different types of food is fun because I get to create a party in my mouth. Physical food is good to eat and the buffet is the best way to offer as much food for a variety of people as they can handle. I decided to take this concept and use it for the spiritual food that keeps us healthy and active for the Lord.

For 2022, I am going to offer an appetizer (Prayer topics), entrée (Daily reading plan), and dessert (Spiritual growth exercise) on this page. Every month, this will be spiritual food that will help you develop good habits for growing closer to the Lord. The reading plan is the harmony of the Gospels that covers the Life of Christ. This reading plan is not as intense as some of the others and will give you a great foundation for learning more about Jesus.

Gospel Harmony Reading Plan (Entrée)
(From R.C. Foster's Life of Christ class)

Prayer Topics (Appetizers)

Week 1 - Pray for your mom and tell her you did

Week 2 - Pray for a first time mom

Week 3 - Pray for a single mother

Week 4 - Pray for a mother who lost her child

Week 5 - Pray for families who lost somebody to a war while serving in the military

122. Mark 6:45-52	138. Matt 16:13-20
123. John 6:15-21	139. Mark 8:27-30
124. Matt 14:34-36	140. Luke 9:18-21
125. Mark 6:53-56	141. Matt 16:21-28
126. John 6:22-71	142. Mark 8:31-9:1
127. Matt 15:1-20	143. Luke 9:22-27
128. Mark 7:1-23	144. Matt 17:1-8
129. John 7:1	145. Mark 9:2-8
130. Matt 15:21-28	146. Luke 9:28-36
131. Mark 7:24-30	147. Matt 17:9-13
132. Matt 15:29-38	148. Mark 9:9-13
133. Mark 7:31-8:9	149. Luke 9:36
134. Mt 15:39- 16:4	150. Matt 17:14-20
135. Mark 8:10-12	151. Mark 9:14-29
136. Matt 16:5-12	152. Luke 9:37-43
137. Mark 8:13-26	

Spiritual Growth Exercise (Dessert)

With Mother's Day happening this month, now would be a good time to celebrate your mother. If she is alive, do something special for her. If she is no longer alive, tell somebody else a story about her. This could be a good way to introduce her to somebody who never got a chance to meet her. It could also be a good opportunity to write a short book filled with stories about your mother. I bet you could fill the book without too much effort because moms are such a big part of our lives. What was she like when you were growing up? Were there funny moments you could share to get a laugh? What were some lessons you learned from your mom? Have fun and write about your mom and share the stories with others.

Memorial Day is at the end of the month and there will be ceremonies that can be good for you to spend time focusing on others. Find a family who will be attending a ceremony in memory of a loved one they lost during a war. Offer your ears to listen to stories about their veteran and be near them during the ceremony. After Memorial Day passes, commit to praying for that family and if possible, start a routine of checking in with them on a regular basis. Find out the date of their loved one's death so you can send them a card to let them know you are thinking about them. Thank the Lord for people who sacrificed for our country.

Mentoring

How to Mentor and How to Be Mentored (Part 3)

How to be a Mentor:

Know your organization. Help the person you are mentoring to answer those big questions. Don't just draw on your own experiences, which may be sourced in past realities. Have a keen appreciation of how your organization is operating right now so that you can tailor your suggestions to where things stand to be in the immediate future that is so important to the person you are helping.

Take your ego out of it. What got you where you are is an interesting narrative...to you. It may have little or no relevance to the newcomer. An occasional war story can be instructive. A series of them is not what a newcomer needs to hear.

Be a good listener. You got where you are by figuring things out. So figure out what the newcomer needs to focus upon. The newcomer won't succeed by emulating you. The newcomer will succeed by figuring out what lessons from your experience can be applied to the current situation. Provide data rather than prescriptions. The newcomer will use those data in ways that may be different from the ways that worked for you.

Don't expect compliance. The newcomer can't replicate your success. He or she can learn some things from your success, but in a fast-moving world what worked for you may not be achievable a second time. Smart people learn how to improvise and modify.

Don't possess. Stand back from the person you are mentoring. To stage-manage the actions of another could be disastrous for both of you.

Help the newcomer to recover from failure. You are never more needed as a mentor than when the person you are helping blows it completely. Take a "Lessons Learned" approach. Okay, your project crashed and burned, and you are not up for a merit raise. What did you learn from it? How will that help you to do better next time? What's the next opportunity you have to show that it was only a glitch? Show me that you're not letting it affect what you have to do next. Have a good cry. Have a drink. Move on.

Keep it businesslike. A mentor who becomes too much of a buddy blurs the line. You can do more for a person when you're not socializing regularly, when you're not building emotional attachments that have nothing to do with the need of the newcomer to learn the way through an organization. Sure, there will be moments when you party and get goofy together. But when you lose your objectivity, you lose your ability to mentor.

Celebrate

In quality management, benchmarking means measuring whether you have achieved what you hope to achieve compared with others who are successful. Inherent in the process is the necessity of celebrating when benchmarks have been achieved. Don't let a benchmark event pass without celebration, if you are a kind and responsible mentor.

Who will be our Next Man Up?



Mentoring today for a better tomorrow

BACK PORCH CONVERSATIONS



R-E-L-A-X

The movie "Cars 3" was an interesting one to watch because the trailer for the movie showed Lightning McQueen in a horrible wreck and then the screen went black. I remember being upset because we had no idea about how this was going to end. The good news is that Lightning McQueen survived the wreck and he was working on returning to the race track for a major portion of the movie.

At this point in his career, he and the other veterans were heading towards retirement as the new generation of race cars took over. Of course, this was not something he wanted to accept, but the reality was that it was time to pass the baton. I really liked this movie because of the references to the "Good Ole Days" of racing, and the scenes involving the old racetrack. When Lightning McQueen started training again, it was completely different from the way he

was taught. Instead of going to the track and burning rubber, he was inside a building with simulators and personal coaches.

He entered a modern building with all kinds of bells and whistles, went into the grand lobby that boasted of the owner's financial success, and on the other side of the room were a few cars in training on the simulators. The cars were making progress until they started thinking about what they were doing. When one of the cars started slowing down and getting nervous, the coach pressed a button that changed the picture on the screen so the car would see something that helped him relax. After seeing the picture and calming down, his speed increased and he was running the way he was designed to run. What happened? The car was getting inside his own head and that was causing him to slow down and panic.

We always perform our best when we relax and stop worrying about our present situation. The car was designed to go fast, but when he thought too much about going fast, he would slow down. This happens in the church too. When we allow ourselves to get inside our own heads, the church cannot "Perform" at its best.

I don't like using the word "Perform" because too many people get hung up on it, but the church does perform a service for God when it carries on its ministry. And if we are not performing at our best, God is not being glorified by what we do. Of course, our best will depend on our skill and ability so we need to keep in mind that while we may not be the best church in the community, we are capable of being the best church we can be for our present situation. How can we become the best church we can be? There is a one-word answer for that: R-E-L-A-X

If we allow ourselves to worry about that which is beyond our control, we hold ourselves back and the results are a mediocre church. We also send a message that we are not completely confident in the church's ability to succeed on its own. This is why many churches make changes based on fear instead of improving their ministry after spending much time in prayer and discussion.

When thinking about ministry struggles, the problem is usually not with the church's design, it is our inability to calm down and let the church be what it was designed to be. I'm not talking about favoring one method over another. I am talking about our need to stop trying everything that is shiny and new without taking the time to make sure it will work for our present context. I am not against innovation as long as it has a purpose, but if we relax and work with what we already have, we might be surprised at how effective our ministry can be. God designed the church, and it is capable of succeeding as long as we stop trying to improve what is already good.



His Name Is Wonderful – Audrey Mieir

The copyright says 1959, but the song was really composed during the Christmas season of 1955. Audrey Mieir's name is on the copyright, but perhaps her brother-in-law Luther, and a centuries-old prophet also deserve some of the royalties from the song "His Name Is Wonderful". Even some of the

children in the church where 39-year old Audrey spent that Christmas (probably with a tree and loved ones around, as in the picture) were part of the song's development, if its creation story is really examined in detail. Is it any wonder that His name is revered by believers, when He can cause events and people to intersect in a way to create something unique?

How many names are appropriate for Him? There are seven in the song that Audrey Mieir wrote that Christmas, including the one in the song's title. And, seven is often cited as the number of completion (or in the secular world, as lucky), so is that its key to success? If it was, maybe He was at work in this way too, a not totally implausible scenario. There was a Christmas play at the church, the Bethel Union Church in Duarte, California, featuring lots of children as characters in the well-known story. That would be enough to touch most people, including the church's pastor, apparently. This pastor, named Luther, was Audrey's brother-in-law. He quoted the words of Isaiah (9:6) – perhaps, they had been part of the play, spoken by one of the kids. The room was hushed, appropriately following the chorus' rendition of 'Silent Night', and Audrey says she sensed something special, prompting her to immediately jot down her brother-in-law's well-chosen words – 'His name is wonderful'. A few hours later, she used other scriptural names of Him, fitting them with the melody that was flowing in her consciousness that Christmas day. Seven names, matched – or probably even exceeded – by the number of contributors to the ditty she composed and introduced at the church that same evening. Seven, or even seventy, maybe more, could be said to have brought this tune along, considering all the various sources that Audrey heard, or read, or sensed in her spirit that day. They all coalesced for Audrey Mieir, the musical resource that God used to assemble the tune.

His names say so much about Him, perhaps that's what Audrey Mieir was struck by that Christmas. Focus on the names, she hints, to draw from Him what He wants to give you. The Mighty King, Great Shepherd, Rock of Ages, Master, and Almighty God is the Lord Jesus, who is Wonderful. He chose all these names for Himself, I'm reminded, as I sing what Audrey wrote. Why did He do so? Was it for me, I think as I sing? Listen close, and you might hear Him singing too, His Spirit mingling with yours. They're His names, but I inherit and have access to these parts of Him as a believer. Now, that's astonishing, when I think of its import. It's wonderful!

The source for Audrey Mieir's "His Name is Wonderful" song story is the book "Our God Reigns: The Stories behind Your Favorite Praise and Worship Songs", by Phil Christensen and Shari MacDonald, Kregel Publications, 2000; and also "The Complete Book of Hymns – Inspiring Stories About 600 Hymns and Praise Songs", by William J. and Ardythe Petersen, Tyndale House Publishers, 2006.



Cory Asbury Tells the Story Behind 'Reckless Love'

In 2018, Cory Asbury's "Reckless Love" topped Billboard's Christian charts for nearly three months. Asbury's single is a no-brainer to add to every church worship team's set list each Sunday morning. But the worship song that's taken the nation by storm has a little more of a background story than you'd think. RELEVANT got a chance to chat with Asbury himself in regards to this song that's stirring up so much controversy about the love of God being "reckless."

RELEVANT: Your song "Reckless Love" has been everywhere lately. Could you tell a little bit about the background of that song? Where did that song come from and what was the writing process?

Asbury: I feel like this song is a culmination of the latter half of my life. So much goes into it and a lot of it has to do with my family, my own upbringing with my own dad. I think "Reckless Love" is a song about the Father's love, and I think so many of us, especially in this generation are so unfamiliar with the Father's love because we had so many skewed ideas of what He's like because of what our own dads were like. I know so many people, myself included, who grew up with a dad who wasn't perfect, to put it lightly. And because my dad wasn't perfect, I viewed God through the lens of my own dad. And I felt many times that God was angry or upset or disappointed in me. I felt I was always letting Him down.

And toward the latter part of my life, maybe the last five or six years, it's kind of been a spin. It feels like I began to ask specific questions of the Father. Like, 'What are You actually like? I've grown up with a picture that's probably pretty off. So could you show me what You're actually like? The Bible tells me that you're kind and you're tender and you're good. And some of the things I've seen in the world in my own experience is they disagree with that idea. So I need you to reconcile that idea to my heart, basically.'

I think a big part of that reconciliation is when our son was born about eight years ago, his name is Gabriel, he's our oldest. And when I held him for the first time, it's like everything changed. You look into their eyes for the first time and you feel this ability and this capacity to love that you've probably never experienced before, even with your wife. It's a different feeling.

And I remember thinking about Gabriel, he's an infant, he can't do anything. And I remember thinking, man, there's nothing this little boy could ever make me do to love him any less. And it was through that experience that I began to see the Father rightly. That's the way He looks at me. I don't have to earn His love, I don't have to do something to deserve His affection and His heart. He just simply adores me because I'm His son and I'm made in His image. And that changed everything for me.

So since Gabriel is 8 years old now, would you say that this song is technically eight years in the making? Or did it kind of just come to you during a specific time?

Yeah, the concept is definitely eight years in the making. The song, with structure and melody, etc. is probably three years in the making, but the concept of the song—the overwhelming, never-ending reckless love of God—has been in my heart because it's what the Lord's been speaking to me and showing me for the past eight years. I've been writing it in my journals and social media posts ... it's been everywhere because it's the theme that the Father has been speaking over my life.

That concept also kind of puts into context the whole idea of recklessness. Is the fact that there's an abandonment to God's love the idea you wanted to put forward?

Yeah I think the protective nature... if I thought of a word to describe the way he protects and watches over us, it's furious, it's intense. He would do anything to stop the enemy or whatever force is coming against us. So that's definitely one aspect of that word in my opinion.

Continued on the next page...

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The more “relevant” application for me is my own life. And in the latter part of my life I wasn’t really a great human. I didn’t get saved until I was about 19 years old even though I grew up in the Church. I wasn’t living a godly lifestyle. In my heart, in a lot of ways, I was against God. And to me the Scripture that sums it up the best starts with, “While we were yet sinners” while we were yet enemies, enmities with God, meaning completely against Him, Christ died for us.

It’s in that place where we’re going, “I’m completely against you” that He’s saying: “I don’t care. I’m coming after your heart and am gonna show you what love looks like on a cross, arms wide open, bleeding in this place of vulnerability and pain.” And he goes, no, it doesn’t matter what it takes. It doesn’t matter the cost. That while we were yet sinners. The reckless love of God.

Some people had questions about the intentions of a word like “reckless” because it is such a unique but powerful way to describe the love of God. Do you think church, in a way, has gotten too legalistic in the way we’re allowed to talk about God?

I think sometimes we get stuck with an understanding or a concept and we can’t see outside of that box. And I think that’s what happens with the word reckless. We know the word has negative connotations, so we cannot see outside of that box. And the truth is that people have used words like that for years. It’s not uncommon to use a negative word—Jeremy Riddle used the word “furious” to describe God, and I think that’s a beautiful adjective to describe God. John Mark described Heaven meeting Earth like a sloppy wet kiss. And I think to censor that does take out the heart and passion behind that. But I don’t want to label the Church as this or that. Sometimes religious spirit is scared to say things to God because they’re scared He’s going to smite us.

But God already knows what we’re thinking before we even say it out loud. God wants us to be honest with Him, just like David was in the Psalms. God’s not offended by it. He’s just waiting for you to be honest so He can actually meet you in that place.

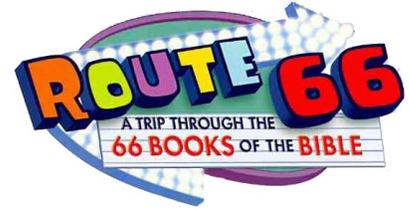
<https://relevantmagazine.com/faith/cory-asbury-reckless-love-the-sunday-staple-sweeping-the-nation-exerts-honesty-and-power/>

Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God
Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the ninety-nine
I couldn't earn it, and I don't deserve it, still, You give Yourself away
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God, yeah

“When I used the phrase, ‘the reckless love of God,’ when we say it, we’re not saying that God Himself is reckless, He’s not crazy. We are, however, saying that the way He loves, is in many regards, quite so. But what I mean is this: He’s utterly unconcerned with the consequences of His own actions with regard to His own safety, comfort and well-being. He doesn’t wonder what He’ll gain or lose by putting Himself on the line, He simply puts Himself out there on the off-chance that you and I might look back at Him and give Him that love in return.” - Cory Asbury.

Epistles: First Thessalonians

(Several sources used each month, see Earl for details)



Who wrote the book?

After Paul started the church in Thessalonica, he wrote this first letter to the believers there within just a few months of leaving. In Acts, Luke recorded that Paul preached for three Sabbath days to the Jews in the local synagogue (Acts 17:2). However, most scholars believe Paul spent about three months, rather than three weeks, with the Thessalonians because he would have had to have been there long enough to receive more than one offering from the Philippian church (Philippians 4:15–16).

Paul's ministry in Thessalonica obviously touched not only Jews but Gentiles as well. Many Gentiles in the church had come out of idolatry, which was not a particular problem among the Jews of that time (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonian church from the city of Corinth around AD 51, just a few months after having preached in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey. Upon leaving Thessalonica under duress, Paul, Silas, and Timothy traveled to Athens by way of Berea. But after a short time in Athens, Paul felt the need to receive a report from the newborn church in Thessalonica, so he sent Timothy back to serve and minister to the new believers there. Paul wanted to check on the state of the Thessalonians' faith, for fear that false teachers might have infiltrated their number. However, Timothy soon returned with a good report, prompting Paul to pen 1 Thessalonians as a letter of encouragement to the new believers.

Why is First Thessalonians so important?

Everyone would like to have some insight into what their future holds. How much more so when it comes to the end of the whole world? First Thessalonians provides Christians with the clearest biblical passage on the coming rapture of believers, an event that will inaugurate the seven-year tribulation. At the rapture, Christ will return for His people. The dead in Christ shall rise first, while those still living will follow close behind. All believers will meet Jesus in the air to begin an eternity spent with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18).

What's the big idea?

Impressed by the faithfulness of the Thessalonians in the face of persecution, Paul wrote to encourage the Christians in that community with the goal that they would continue to grow in godliness. Paul knew that the people had been exposed to errant teaching from those in opposition to the way of Jesus Christ and the grace of God. And Paul also understood that unless the young church continued to mature in its faith, the danger would only increase over time.

With that in mind, Paul taught the people that any spiritual growth would ultimately be motivated by their hope in the ultimate return of Jesus Christ. Paul was never interested in simply telling people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, for he knew that what ultimately inspired change was a life of consistently walking in the power of God's Spirit. And so to a group of young Christians with questions and uncertainties, Paul offered the hope of Christ's return, providing both comfort in the midst of questions and motivation to godly living.



This month's Church myth: "Small churches do not need a secretary"

Several of my preacher friends who serve in small churches are struggling with their work load during the week. I feel their pain because I am loaded down too. This month's myth is a little too real because many small churches think that the preacher does not need a secretary when there are low attendance numbers. For some strange reason, the thought is that the preacher needs something to do during the week when there are empty pews on Sunday mornings. The reality is that the empty pews on Sunday mornings create more work for the preacher because not only does he preach and teach, some members think he needs to get out and recruit people to show up for worship. Of course, the Bible contains stories of the church members bringing their friends and family to church instead of letting the Apostles do all of the inviting, but that is another topic for another day.

The lack of a secretary can discourage a preacher who is too busy with administrative work to study and prepare sermons/lessons for the edification of the church. In Acts 6, the Apostles had a similar situation when they were loaded down with the responsibility of running the food pantry and that took away from their time preparing for preaching the Gospel. They needed volunteers to lighten their load so they could get back to what God called them to do. Once they set up the volunteers to be in charge of the food pantry, the Apostles were able to get back to work and the church grew even bigger than it already was.

Whether the church is big or small, the amount of time required to prepare spiritual food for the church does not change. The sermons and lessons still take time if the preacher is going to be good at it. The more time that can be set aside for this, the better the sermons and lessons will be. But if the preacher has to spend most of his time creating bulletins, answering phone calls, editing newsletters, and performing other administrative tasks from week to week, his quality of work will decrease to the point where people will start to wonder if he is able to be effective. This sad reality is one of the reasons why many preachers burn out and quit after a few years of handling tasks they were never trained to do.

Most preachers are not good secretaries because that is not what they were trained to be. The only reason why some of them appear to be competent with administration is because they have no other choice but to find a way to make it happen. It is more about survival than it is about skill. If the church wants the preacher to be good at what he is called to do, they need a secretary or at least a volunteer who can take care of the administrative side so his time can be used for study and preparing the spiritual meals for the people. Even if it is only for a few hours each week, the help will be greatly appreciated by any preacher needing it.

THIS MONTH IN FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH HISTORY

In 2017, we began a Sunday Night series of classes for a couple of months. We started with a time of singing in the sanctuary with everybody together. After 3 songs, we split up into youth and adult groups to have our classes. The youth were watching a video series called "Not a Fan" by Kyle Idleman while the adults studied a book called "The Mentor Leader" by Tony Dungy. The book was a good way to introduce the concept of mentoring as a leadership style in our church. Every position in the church should have somebody mentoring a replacement. In Titus, Paul tells the older members of the church to teach the younger members of the church. After we finished the book, we moved into a study of Titus to further the discussions about church leadership.

The video "Not a Fan" was created by Kyle Idleman who is one of the Pastors at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville KY. The concept is that we need to be more than just fans of the Lord. We need to be involved and live out our faith through our daily actions. We need to get in the game instead of sitting in the bleachers. This video series challenged our youth to live for God every day as one of His children. God doesn't want fans. He wants followers.

After the classes ended, we decided that Sunday nights are good for temporary studies but there is not enough support for longer commitments. As of right now, the only Sunday night activity we have is our 5th Sunday sing that happens 4 times each year. If there is any interest in doing something else on Sunday nights, I am sure we can make it happen!

"Pray for FCC"

For 2022, we want to cover our church in prayer on a weekly basis. Along with the many prayers that go up on our behalf, I am declaring every Tuesday to be a day for us to offer up special prayers specifically for our church. Please join us by praying at some point every Tuesday!

One Liners to Make You Laugh

My tires are so thin you can almost see the air.

Bible Trivia Question (Send answers to Earl)

Answer to last month's question:

The sailors discovered Jonah was responsible for the storm by casting lots (Jonah 1:7)

Winners: Frank Jackson/Michael Winfrey/Michaela Winfrey

Be one of the first 3 people to answer correctly and you will be a winner!



Be one of #4-10 to answer and you will receive an honorable mention!

Honorable Mention: Phillis Jackson, Wil Winfrey

This month's question:

On which day of the creation did God create trees and plants?

The Original Mother's Heart

For as long as I can remember I wanted to be an archaeologist. The whole idea of finding something buried and unseen by others appealed to me. When younger, I could be found digging in some corner of the yard. Best thing I ever found was an old spark plug calibrator. And then, I encountered Christ. My whole life changed, but my love for a good dig didn't. It was simply redirected. God placed a treasure trove of priceless jewels within reach when I was handed a Bible. Miner's hat? Check. Pickaxe and shovel? Check. Burning passion to discover God? Check, check.

In my search for God's nature, I stumbled across something stunning: His handiwork in fashioning mothers' hearts. It's easy to miss God weaving Himself into mothers and their hearts. A deep well failing definition. Greeting cards offer armies of categories addressing it. Hollywood's spent millions depicting it onscreen. Yet the wellspring of a mother's heart remains mysterious. Our Creator takes care to knit Himself into who we are and will become. In examining His love for us, His mothering nature is quickly apparent.

"...How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings."
Matthew 23:27

How could God reference Himself as a protective mother, lest He'd poured his compassionate nature into the mother's heart? His maternal temperament continues"

"...He will exult over you with joy; He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy."
Zephaniah 3:17

"Quiet in His love," duplicates the tenderest moments between mother and child, referencing the child being fully contented and simply enjoying the closeness of its mother. The child wants nothing more than its mother's presence. It's a time of quiet love. Drawing powerful strength from her proximity alone. Again we see His mothering side:

"Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb?" Isaiah 49:15

Who better than the Designer of mothers could explain this nurturing side of Himself? The nourishing definition of Jehovah Jireh. Our Provider. His provision in limitless care was famously spoken to Moses. Asking a yet unnamed God His name, He replied, "I AM." A statement begging to fill in the blank. "I AM everything. I AM infinite. I AM all powerful.

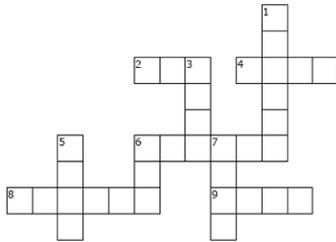
Until my mother's passing, I took full advantage of my family membership and went straight to her for comfort. Dad understood my running past him to reach her arms. With advancing years, hurts changed, but the source of my consolation didn't I still went to mom for comfort. For through her kindness, forgiveness, and never-ending compassion, I came to wholly trust God. He was easily recognizable in her and I deeply valued God's mothering heart woven tightly into hers.

Our Father in heaven is solidly our Father. His maternal nature guarantees attendance at every bird's funeral. Keeps track of 7.2 billion heads of hair. Tallies innumerable thoughts about us exceeding grains of sand. Stills our storms, heals our diseases, binds our broken hearts. The most potent attribute of His mother's heart, is His lavish forgiveness of our sins. Black sins, washed in red blood, producing robes of white righteousness. Like the mother that deliberately forgets her child's shortcomings, He casts our sins directionally as far as the east is from the west, until sinking to the floor of the Sea of Forgetfulness.

Simply stated, He is Father God with a mother's heart. Waiting to wipe every tear; sitting up with us through the night; and listening to our troubles-solving them while we are yet speaking.

A Mother's Day Crossword

My son, obey your father's commands, and don't neglect your mother's instruction. Proverbs 6:20 (NLT)



ACROSS

- 2. To hold someone close with your arms to show that you love them
- 4. A piece of writing in which the words often rhyme
- 6. A woman who has given birth to a child; s female parent
- 8. The first day of the week
- 9. The strong feeling of affection which you have for your mother

DOWN

- 1. The brightly-colored bloom on a plant which has a pleasant smell
- 3. Another word for present; something which is given
- 5. Considerate and helpful; used to describe a person's behavior
- 6. The fifth month of the year
- 7. To assist someone in doing something; _____ your mother clean the house

FLOWER	KIND	HUG	MOTHER	LOVE
SUNDAY	HELP	MAY	POEM	GIFT

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SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Boaz arranges to marry Ruth
Can you spot 10 differences between the pictures?



A Mother's Day Word Search

Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. Proverbs 4:1



Complete the word search activity.

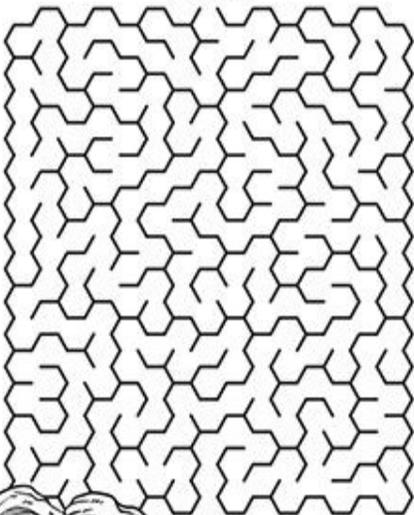
S J L Q B B M M S F J U S A R
 Z W K Y F A M I L Y R D Q G H
 V S I H N C S P T R L I N Z P
 O I S A D Q P Z J T E V E A K
 M L S W I Z E I N L L W Q N P
 M P E Z V E C E P W O I Q E D
 D O S Z M S I M V H V S W U C
 H L T J Z T A T H G I E E H H
 W E K H A X L H N L N G W U Q
 T I L P E T Q I L A G V X G A
 T K S P N R V C A R I N G S L
 J Y N E F I A W C E D Q Q T W
 P I R X G U I K R K X L J H N
 F A W H U L L Y U I B X P U T
 P E L I D I Q F W X A C D N N

FAMILY	EXAMPLE	GIVING	MOTHER	SPECIAL
HUGS	PARENT	KISSES	PATIENT	LOVING
FRIEND	WISE	WISE	CARING	HELPFUL

RUTH & NAOMI

Show Ruth and Naomi the way to Israel.

FINISH



START



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS - MAY 2022



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Prayer - 9:30am Coffee - 9:45am S.S. - 10am Worship - 11am	Daily Scriptures are given for us in anticipation of the sermon	Pray for FCC reminder to pray for our church every Tuesday	Elders meet as needed. For questions, see Frank or Chris	Mission of the Month: Meg's House	Weekly bulletin will have the most current information	All events subject to change if needed
1	2	3 <u>Pray for FCC</u>	4	5	6	7
	Luke 1:26-38	Luke 1:39-56	Matt 1:18-25	Luke 2:22-38	Luke 2:39-52	John 19:25-27
8	9	10 <u>Pray for FCC</u>	11	12	13	14
Mother's Day	John 1:9-18	John 9	John 11:1-44	John 14:1-14	John 16:16-24	John 20:24-31
15	16	17 <u>Pray for FCC</u>	18	19	20	21
Chris Crawford Preaching	Matt 4:12-25	Mark 1:1-39	Matt 14:22-33	Matthew 16	Luke 22:31-62	John 21
22	23	24 <u>Pray for FCC</u>	25	26 (Phil 2:5-11) Newsletter Submissions Due	27	28
	Mark 16	Luke 24:13-22	John 21:1-23		1 Cor 15:1-11	Acts 1
29 Youth Sunday	30 Memorial Day	31 <u>Pray for FCC</u>				
Singspiration (6:00pm)	John 14:1-14	John 14:15-31				

4/10 - Triumphal Entry

4/17 - Resurrection

4/24 - Living Proof: Mary Magdalene

5/01 - Living Proof: The Road to Emmaus

5/08 - Mary, The Mother of Jesus

5/15 - Living Proof: Thomas

5/22 - Living Proof: Peter

5/29 - Ascension

Life of Christ



"⁴⁰ God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead." (Acts 10:40-41 ESV)

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