

# new life *news*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF NEW LIFE CHURCH OF CHRIST JULY 2016



## Steve says...

. . . that this edition of the newsletter is full of ideas for keeping your spiritual life fresh and growing. Enjoy it and maybe put some of these ideas into practice in your own life.

One of the things that I sometimes do that brings with it a lot of awareness of the presence of God in my life is to do what I sometimes call prayer journaling. I usually do this in the morning and begin by writing down the word “Yesterday”. This becomes the first word of a sentence that is the beginning of my journaling.

The content of the journaling is the events of yesterday, together with any thoughts I might have about them. As I reflect on these things, I look for places where God was involved and then I write out a prayer thanking God for his involvement or asking for his wisdom, or seeking his intervention, and so on. Sometimes it becomes a written series of questions or scripture as I begin to dialogue with God over an event. Sometimes it is just me writing to God about what happened in my day. Sometimes it becomes purely prayer as I share my struggles with the Lord.

I find this combination of journaling the events of a day together with writing out my prayers to be really helpful in recognizing and celebrating and encouraging the involvement of God in my everyday life. The problem with this concept is when I allow it to become a task to be completed rather than a conversation. When I feel guilty for being too short or something, then it has become a habit and lost its power of connection to God. So try it, but don't let it become a legalistic have to kind of a deal. God Bless!

# Keep the Faith

During my last year as the music director at Mansfield Christian School we produced a musical entitled “The Christmas Post,” in which a particular character named, Alice, was having a rough time in life. She desperately wanted to follow the Lord and trust Him, but was only met with challenge and difficulty. In the midst of a major conflict, Alice says, “For the last three years, all I’ve done is ask God for more faith. And as far as I can tell, He keeps answering, no.” Her friend, Dixie, shares a poignant turn of phrase in response to Alice, “You don’t need more faith—you just need to start acting on it.”

So how do we keep and build the faith that God desires for us to enjoy? Perhaps we need not ask for more faith, but instead to simply act on it. I want to briefly share three ways that I strive to keep my faith built up in the Lord. These are of course above and beyond the weekly gatherings in worship and participation in discipleship group. They are things that keep me close to the Lord and encouraged to grow in my faith as much as I can.

One of the most important things I do to strengthen my faith is to be in God’s Word. I have found the YouVersion Bible app to be very helpful in several ways. First, using a daily reading plan I am able to read and listen to the scriptures every morning during my quiet time with God. The plan takes you through scripture passages from the Old Testament, Books of Poetry, and the New Testament every day and tracks your progress. Second, it also provides helpful notes and information that connects the passages showing how they relate to one another where applicable. Third, I enjoy the many reading plans the app offers regarding scripture studies on different topics as well as devotional materials that can be used as well. It is so exciting to read God’s Word and then watch it come to life in my interaction with people every day. I am reminded of the usefulness of scripture and I am committed to understanding God’s Word as I read along.

Another great app that I use is called PrayerMate. This handy tool helps me to track the various prayer needs and praises for myself and others and reminds me to be in prayer every day. In the app I have set up different categories for prayer including my family, friends, church, and others. Within each category you can insert specific subjects. Under the family category I have set up my parents, my fiancé and her family, my brother and his family, and extended family as well. Once you have everything set up, the app will automatically choose subjects from every category and place them on prayer cards that individually highlight the subjects and details that you have entered. You can edit the information as you go and place God’s answers to your prayers within the app as well. The app will remind me to pray every day and it helps me to focus my thoughts on specific people and subjects as I go before the Lord.

Perhaps the greatest opportunity I have to grow in my relationship with the Lord is to walk alongside others as they deepen their faith. I have had the privilege to mentor and disciple some young men through the years that have proven to encourage my own walk with the Lord. As we study scripture together and pray for the Spirit’s leading in life, we form bonds with one another as we seek Christ together. Whether it be difficulties in life or the celebration of special events, I look forward to my time together with these individuals. They have allowed me into their lives for a front row seat to the work of God.

As I mentioned at the beginning, these are just some of the ways that I am determined to grow in my faith. Just as important as growth and maturity are in my relationship with Christ, I must be intentional about living out my faith and putting the things that I have learned into practice. Being faithfully committed to the body of Christ, the Church, is something I don’t take lightly. While I seek to know God and to make Him known in my personal life, I know that I cannot reach my greatest potential without my brothers and sisters as we live our faith together.

Alice puts her faith into practice and soon finds herself swept up in the gospel chorus, “Don’t give up. Don’t give in. When the going’s tough that’s just when faith kicks in. Well, the Lord will see you through. Yes, He’s watching over you. Night and day, He’s tellin’ you to keep the faith.” Let’s commit to doing whatever it takes to growing in our relationship with Christ and to keeping the faith!

## July Birthdays

- 1 – Bob McCready
- 3 – Cliff Hardin, Carol Cogar
- 4 – Kiona Cover, Spencer Benick, Evan Basye
- 5 – Lauren & Riley Johnson, Alex Kistler
- 6 – Rich Tucker, Addison Noe
- 7 – Ken Baker, Jon Beveridge, Kim Landis
- 8 – Kim Dixon, Cari Johnson
- 9 – Brad Sharp
- 10 – Phyllis Shaffer, Jennipher Fletcher  
Becky Shaffer
- 11 – Karla MacTavish, Dan Noe
- 16 – Jason Sharp, Joey Lucci
- 17 – Ginger Kunz, Tabitha Hamilton,
- 19 – Ralph Walker
- 20 – Rebecca (Becca) Sharp
- 22 – Earl Beal, Karla Armstrong
- 26 – Ann Jordan, Carol Wilson
- 27 – Karen Carroll
- 28 – Olivia Lucci

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## July Events

- July 4 – Office Closed for Holiday**
- July 6 – Comfort & Joy Sewing 9:00am**
- July 13 – Community Meal 5:00-6:30pm**
- July 20 – Women's Bible Study 7:00pm**



## Jason's Jam

### Growing in the Faith

Sometimes in life, we can get so busy that we let our Faith get stagnant, and that is a very dangerous thing to let happen. We as Christ's servants, need to continue to grow in him. I personally take time in scripture as well as spending time in various books by Christian authors, and watching several messages by Christian speakers. But, the most important thing you and I can do, is spending time with the Father, talking to him, listening to him, and simply taking in the wonderful joys he has blessed us with!

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### A Line from Liming

The garden that my dad used to plant would not grow evenly. He would have a row of green beans with some getting real big and others, well, not even out of the ground. It is sad, but that is the way Christians are. Some grow a great deal and some are the same as they were when they were baptized.

How did some grow? It is all because they spend time in the Bible and in prayer. Why do others stay a baby in Jesus for life? It is because they do not read the Word and do not pray. It is just that simple. How are you doing?

I love you all,  
Steve Liming

## Kyle's Korner

\*This month we were asked to write about what we do to keep our faith fresh and active. From the first, I need to confess that this is an area that is in a constant state of peaks and valleys for me. There are times when I am extremely disciplined and focused, giving my walk with Christ a clarity that propels me to live for Him. There are other times, though, when prayers feel forced, when Scripture blurs on the page and my faith seems to slide into laxity. I wanted to mention this first to bring to the surface the fact (which all of you already know) that we ministers are just as human as everyone else and that we are not immune to the ebbs and flows of the Christian life. We get tired, we lose focus, we receive chinks in our armor from the attacks of the evil one. But, regardless of temporary seasons of difficulty, victory is ultimately found in the continued awareness of Christ's presence, whether seen brightly or vaguely. He has promised to be with us "always, even unto the end of the age." That promise alone gives motivation to push through the deepest and darkest valleys.

\*So, what do I do to nurture my faith? The highest priority in my spiritual journey is regular time in the Holy Scriptures. I believe that the Holy Spirit has spoken to us through the apostles and prophets and that their message is recorded forever for us within the pages of the Bible. In the Scriptures Christ is revealed. We see Him clearly living as one of us, walking around in the fallen world, rubbing shoulders with sorrow, death and pain. We see Him behind the scenes in the Old Testament, the Father preparing a people for His arrival. We see glimpses of the Great Victory, when He overcomes all for the glory of His Father and for the sake of His people. Without Scripture we get no clear impression of Christ, and as a result, no clear impression of God.

\*I also read old sermons. The faith of ancient Christians motivates me to greater things. I have always been drawn to the faith of the ancient Church and have been deeply challenged by their messages given to Christians who were facing literal death for their faith. The fact that the Church has survived for centuries, despite several organized attempts to exterminate it is a great witness to the fact that God Himself is behind it. I believe that the preaching of these Christian forefathers of ours were a great motivation for our Christian predecessors to stay faithful no matter what.

\*I also do my best to occasionally fast. Fasting is a discipline with very great reward. The motivation behind the fasting is generally struggling with the question, "What things do I live like I need more than God?" We have to have food to live. By denying the natural impulse to eat, a person can come to grips with the fact that we hunger because our body knows it is being denied something it needs. This reminds me of how desperately I need God and that He alone is my one true need. All other needs apply to the body. But He offers a life even beyond that.

\*An area I seek to grow in constantly and am never satisfied with in my life is prayer. I pray. Every day I pray and thank God for His blessings and for the challenges He has presented to me. I seek His wisdom to help me fulfill the duties He has placed before me. I intercede for my family, friends, and those He has called me to minister to. But, even so, I always have the feeling at the end of the day that I haven't prayed enough. I always feel that, when looking back through a day, that more of it should have been spent in prayer. If I had prayed more, I would have had more godly thoughts, I would have worked harder, I would have trusted more, etc. I think part of this is normal. As we crave to be with God more, the more we feel empty about the times we aren't consciously engaged in conversation with Him. But there is also the reality that I really could and should pray more. Prayer ought to be at the heart of all the things I do. It is only by connecting with God through prayer that I acknowledge that all I am doing is the result of my relationship with the Living God. Without grasping this fact I can read all the Scripture I want and it is knowledge that puffs us, not rooted in love of Christ. I can hear all the sermons I want, but they amount to self-help advice for ethical living rather than Spirit-driven charges to look more like Christ. I can fast for days but it only becomes an empty ritual, notching another rigorous discipline on my belt, instead of single-minded pursuit of the awareness of God in my life.

\*I hope that you take opportunities to seek to grow closer to the Lord every day. It is only by continual fellowship with Christ that we sense His Spirit working in us. If we aren't around Him, we don't recognize His voice. I encourage you, if you don't already, to find various ways to connect with God, so that you may "taste and see that [He] is good."

Blessings,  
Kyle