

# *The Master's Message*

## *The Newsletter of the Church of the Master*

### *July/August, 2024*

*Virtual Adult Bible Study*  
*Wednesday, 7:00 PM*  
*Saturday, 12:00*

*2783 Lafayette Avenue*  
*Bronx, N.Y. 10465*  
*718-597-6298*

*Sunday Worship*  
*Sunday 11:00 am*

*[cotm47@verizon.net](mailto:cotm47@verizon.net)*

*[WWW.COTMBRONX.ORG](http://WWW.COTMBRONX.ORG)*

*Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor*

*Summer*  
*is here!*



### *God's Grace*

As I sat on the grassy hillside,  
A soft breeze blew across my face.  
It seemed to cover me with a peace;  
I felt it was God's grace.

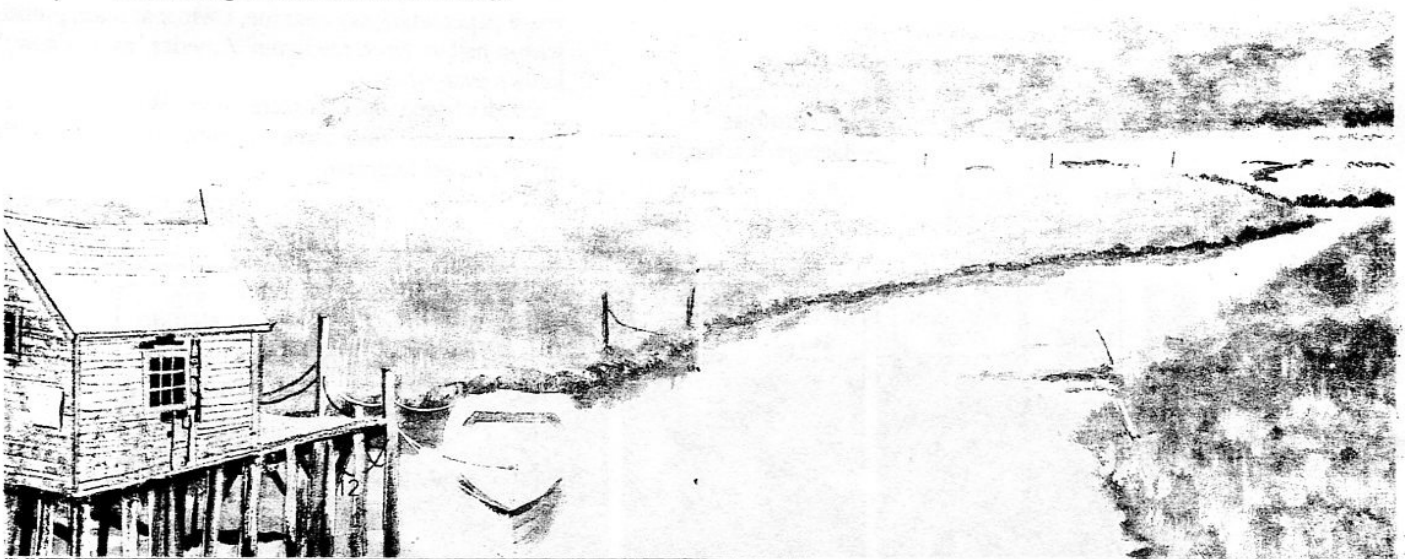
The beauty of God's splendor  
Almost took my breath away.  
Lush golden apples everywhere –  
I bowed my head and prayed.

The brook beside the meadow  
Flowed gently down below.  
Droplets of silvery crystal danced;  
Another gift God has bestowed.

The sturdy trees that surrounded me  
Appeared like cathedrals grand.  
They added to the beauty  
That God spread across the land.

I thank my God for everything  
Especially the delight of this place,  
And for the love He has for us  
As it is filled with His holy grace.

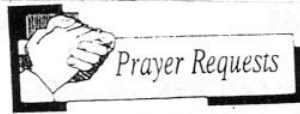
Shirley Hile Powell



## SPECIAL DATES\*

- Independence Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>

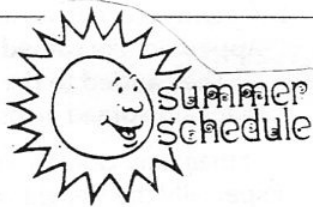
## \*News From the Pews\*



Continue praying for:  
Ellen McCullough,  
Allen Ford, Carole Mahon,  
Loretta Byrd, Alice & Alex Rivera

Everyone is invited to join our virtual **"Hour of Prayer Power"** every Friday at 7:00 PM. The conference call-in number is 605-475-4860, code: 371231#

Our **Online Bible Study** meets Wednesday at 7:00 PM and Saturday at 12:00. Contact Ron Rivera (917-716-8273) for information on joining



Beginning Sunday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, our morning worship service will begin at **10:00 AM**. Praise and Prayer time will begin at **9:50 AM**. This schedule will continue through and including Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup>.

- "America stands on two great pillars — faith and morality. Without these, our foundation crumbles."  
—George Washington

## \*CHURCH CHUCKLES\*

When Jacob's parents gave him his weekly allowance, he gave it to his little brother. "Why did you do that?" his mother asked.

"I already have \$75, and my Sunday school teacher said it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to go to heaven," Jacob said. "I don't want to be rich, I want to go to heaven."

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### CHURCH HAPPENINGS

The blessing of the pets will be followed by a hot dog lunch.

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## Horse sense

The clergyman Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887) went to buy a horse. The horse's owner declared, "This horse is perfectly sound. He can go at any gait, walk, pace, trot or gallop. He will work any place you put him, and he will stand without hitching. He will never bite nor kick. He is gentle, yet full of spirit. He goes when you want him to go and he stops when you want him to stop."

Beecher looked the horse up and down with great admiration. Then he said blissfully, "Oh, if only that horse were a member of my church."

## "America"

Samuel Francis Smith, a Baptist pastor, wrote the hymn "America" in 1831. Smith was studying a tune he had never heard, although he knew the British used it for the hymn "God Save the King." The British had borrowed the tune from the Germans, who gave it patriotic lyrics.

Smith described what happened as he contemplated the tune: "I instantly felt the impulse to write a patriotic hymn of my own, adapted to the tune. Picking up a scrap of waste paper which lay near me, I wrote at once, probably within half an hour, the hymn 'America,' as it is now known everywhere."

Smith's friend and classmate Oliver Wendell Holmes once told him, "Your name and fame will live when I and my works are forgotten."





Greetings All,

I came across the below article in the May/June 2024 Edition of Christianity Today, written by Sandra McCracken. The article reminds us, especially in the chaotic and divisive time we are in as we approach another Presidential election season in our country, to *be still* and know that God is still above and in charge of our lives, our country's leaders, our churches, and indeed our world.

As we embark on celebrating our great country's Independence Day or July 4<sup>th</sup>, and lazy, hazy summer vacations during July and August, I urge you to read McCracken's article and practice *being still* even while you travel the country or out of the country and enjoy summer's respite with your family and loved ones. We can inevitably find more peace and enjoyment in our lives by learning to be still and know that God has got us and everything in our world in His hands. Happy summer!

Shalom to you now,

*Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden*

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden  
Pastor  
Church of the Master Reformed Church

## Be Still and Come Out of Your Shell

To heal divides, God wants to bring us out from hiding.  
Sandra McCracken (As published in Christianity Today, May/June 2024 Edition)

One recent sunny afternoon, I stopped at a park near my son's school to take a phone call. As I sat down on the edge of Radnor Lake, I noticed a part of the shoreline appear to slowly break off near where I was sitting. It was a giant snapping turtle hidden in the mud, camouflaged in sticks and algae. I must have startled it, because it pushed off for a swim.

I thought about the noisy plans we make while the rest of creation goes about its business. I also wondered: Just as turtles retreat at the possibility of danger, in what ways do we do the same?

Our fears are so varied and constant that we often hide in the safety of the edges, avoiding conflict or controversy. We are anxious about the myriad dangers at our doorstep, whether societal woes or political insecurities.

Especially in this election year, we have allowed our burdens to overwhelm us, and as a consequence the common ground even in our churches has eroded.

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We divide over our definitions of moral virtue. We fear falling to the extremes but, in doing so, miss out on the moderate discourse that could bring gospel unity even in our diversity. We want stronger bonds and a brighter future but don't know how to go about building them.

We prove true the line in T. S. Eliot's famous poem *Burnt Norton*: "human kind / Cannot bear very much reality." So often, we settle for blending in with our surroundings like the turtle.

But Scripture calls us out into deeper waters. Avoiding risk and conflict is not the foundation for real peace; the fear of the Lord is. And his word animates us to pursue it (Ps. 34: 11–14). Christians are called to seek peace and to pray for the cities in which we live (Jer. 29:7).

Unchecked fear keeps us on the run and fuels our disagreements, but God's power and providence over us allow us to find security in his care. When we look to him, he will deliver us from all our fears and give us wisdom to navigate the complexities we face.

We need wisdom in troubled times. But we cannot conjure it by ourselves. If we seek him, God's wisdom abounds to us—the same wisdom that enables him to be the one who "breaks the bow and shatters the spear" and "makes wars to cease to the ends of the earth" (Ps. 46:9). These passages outline God's poetic power, and the psalm concludes with a word to us: "Be still, and know that I am God ... I will be exalted in the earth" (v. 10).

In an anxious age, this stillness might just be one of our greatest acts of worship. Before you watch or read the news, stillness. Before you cast your vote, stillness. Before you make dinner, stillness. To worship God in this way is to point to his faithfulness, past, present, and future. It bolsters our hearts to endure more of this present reality—not as avoiders or cynics but as messengers of hope.

When our anxious fears take their place under the holy fear of the Lord, we become teachable (Prov. 1:7). The fear of the Lord calls us to admit when we're wrong. The fear of the Lord gives us courage to speak up for what's right even when it's unpopular. And the fear of the Lord reminds us that we are not our own but belong to Christ, that he is God and we are not. He draws us out of hiding, engaging us to be ministers of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18).

Beside the turtles at Radnor Lake, I listen for the subtle song of creation. I become a student of stillness, as Eliot writes,

at the still point of the turning world ...  
Where past and future are gathered.

And when I go back to my work of writing songs, I find myself speaking less and noticing more, swimming to deeper waters and hearing the stories of others—whether my musical collaborators, my children, my neighbors, or even my enemies.

In view of God's mercy and to seek peace, we must seek stillness first and look to the Reconciler who has made us to be reconcilers too. God has come to bring hope and beauty to this wounded world, and we get to play a part.



# Summer scoops

We all scream for ice cream at this time of year. National Ice Cream Month (July) and National Ice Cream Day (July 16), practically make it a responsibility to enjoy a scoop or two.

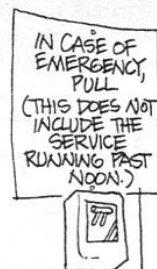


## Heart matters

A relationship between two or more of Christ's followers is simply a heart-to-heart matter.

Methodism founder John Wesley said: "If your heart is as my heart, give me your hand." In other words, when two (or more) people know Christ, they have something wonderful in common. Therefore, they should embrace one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Attending worship and being involved in church activities draws us closer to Jesus and to each other. As Christians, we are called to be hospitable toward strangers, not just our friends and acquaintances. Remember Christ's words: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me ..." (Matthew 25:35, NRSV).



Campbell.

## A parent's prayer

Heavenly Father,

Make me a better parent. Teach me to understand my children, to listen patiently to what they have to say, and to answer all their questions kindly. Keep me from interrupting them or contradicting them. Make me as courteous to them as I would have them be to me.

Forbid that I should ever laugh at their mistakes, or resort to shame or ridicule when they displease me. May I never punish them for my own selfish satisfaction or to show my power. Let me not tempt my child to lie or steal. And guide me hour by hour that I may demonstrate by all I say and do that honesty produces happiness.

Reduce, I pray, the meanness in me. And when I'm out of sorts, help me, Lord, to hold my tongue.

May I ever be mindful that my children are children, and I should not expect of them the judgment of adults. Let me not rob them of the opportunity to wait on themselves and to make decisions. Bless me with the bigness to grant them all their reasonable requests and the courage to deny them privileges I know will do them harm. Make me fair and just and kind. And fit me, Lord, to be loved, respected and imitated by my children.

Amen.

## Our church is to be sold

Our church is to be sold! Yes, our church is to be sold! No, we are not about to lose our building through foreclosure or repudiated debt. However, our church must be sold to the city and county. It has been planted to wield an influence beyond its membership and walls. Thus, we are presented with an enormous challenge.

Our church must be sold to the unchurched! There are scores of people in our community who would attend our church and join us in the Lord's service if we would bother to sell our church to them.

How much is our church worth to you? How much do you value its ministry? How much do you value the Christ it proclaims? As a member of this church, you are selling your church to others every day. Are you selling it short? Has it helped you to the extent that you're willing to sell it to others? Will you be enthusiastic in talking about your church? Will you share your church with others who have no idea what they're missing?

Take our church seriously and talk to people about what our church has to offer them.



## Did you know?

When America turns 250-years-young in 2026, the celebration is called a semiquincentennial.

## Fun Fourth facts

WeAreTeachers.com cites these fun facts about July Fourth.

- The Liberty Bell in Philadelphia is tapped 13 times every July Fourth in honor of the original 13 colonies.
- Americans spend more than \$1 billion on fireworks annually.
- "The Star-Spangled Banner" became the United States' national anthem in 1931.
- Bristol, Rhode Island, was home to the first Fourth of July parade in 1785.
- Guidelines for flag etiquette, including rules for the Fourth of July, can be found in the U.S. Flag Code ([military.com/flag-day/us-flag-code.html](http://military.com/flag-day/us-flag-code.html)).

## Better late than never

A few years ago, 97-year-old Edmond Fryar became a pastor in North Carolina. When someone asked him why he waited so long to be ordained, he answered, "I wanted to be sure God was talking to me."

Christians don't need to wait for God to tell them that they're needed to serve. Not only is this the day the Lord has made, it's the day Christians have kingdom work to do.



Gasoline Alley