

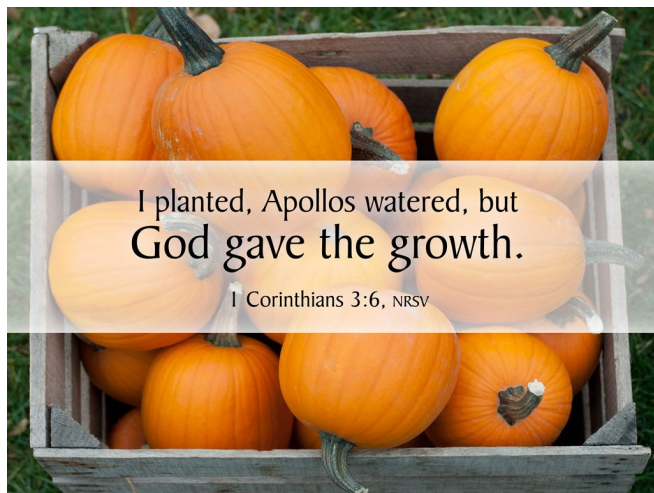
AUGUST PASTOR'S PEN

“Reflections on Faith, Italy and the French Riviera”

Beloved Members and Friends of Grace EPC,

Thanks to your generosity and the generosity of the congregation at First Pres. Thomasville, Ann and I enjoyed a wonder-filled vacation in Italy and the French Riviera. Since Christians never take a vacation from our faith, I want to share some of the insights I had as we spent a week on a cruise ship, taking excursions to famous historical places.

- Though there is much outward religiosity in places like Rome, we didn't encounter many expressions of a personal relationship with Christ. St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in the world, is more like a museum than a place of worship. Many of the statues, paintings and burial crypts of the popes seemed to encourage idolatry rather than worship. Both Rome and Florence contain an odd mixture of Christian and pagan art. In Florence, not far from Michelangelo's magnificent statue of David, is perhaps the most famous painting in the Uffizi Museum, "The Birth of Venus." Nevertheless, for the believer, the art in Rome and Florence inspires reverence for the Creator who has endowed his creatures with gifts of creativity. The religious paintings of Michelangelo, Leonardo, Caravaggio and other Renaissance masters caused me to rejoice in the Lord and his gift of beauty. I had just read a terrific book, *Rembrandt Is In the Wind: Learning to Love Art Through the Eyes of Faith*, by Russ Ramsey. Some of the paintings he cites in the book were ones I saw in the Uffizi.
- We had a lovely experience of having dinner with the same folks several evenings. At our table was a Roman Catholic couple and a mother and daughter, who were Mormons. They were happy to have me say Grace at each meal, but did not seem particularly interested in Ann and me sharing our faith. We shared our faith anyhow. The same thing happened on the flight from Barcelona to Philadelphia. We met a Steeler fan and his fiancée. They were happy to talk about football, but when I shared my experience of Bible study and evangelism with a group of Christian Steelers, there was a noticeable change in the conversation. Once again, our job is to share the good news. God is responsible for the results. We will continue to pray for all six of those folks and trust that we planted some seeds that someone else can water (I Cor. 3:6, 7).



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 August 2022

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- The cruise ship had great food and entertainment, but going to the top deck, where the pool and spa are located, was not a pleasant experience. When did our culture throw modesty out the window? The way young people and even older people dressed, not just at the pool, but all over Italy and the French Riviera, was nothing short of gross. We couldn't believe that parents would allow their children to go out in public the way they were dressed (or undressed). We concluded that we have officially become old fogies, but trust me, none of our granddaughters will ever dress like that!
- Seeing God's amazing creation, from the height of volcanic Mt. Etna to the beautiful blue sea of the French Riviera, was a worship experience. One of the joys of traveling to different locations is that we see God's handiwork with new eyes. We're so thankful for all we got to see and do and for your generosity in helping it to happen.



Big love in Jesus,
Pastor Dave

Evangelism Task Force

Two-thirds of American Christians don't know any methods for telling others about Jesus, poll finds

By Nicole Alcindor

Most American Christians want to share their faith but only a minority of them have encouraged others to embrace Jesus Christ in the last six months, according to new data released by Lifeway Research that suggests more than six in 10 believers don't know any methods for telling others about their faith in Christ.

Released last week, the Lifeway Research survey titled "Evangelism Explosion Study of American Christians' Openness to Talking about Faith" is based on survey responses from 1,011 American Christians who were interviewed between April 12–23.

With an error margin of plus or minus 3.1%, "quotas and slight weights were used to balance gender, age, region, ethnicity, education and religion to reflect the population more accurately."

The survey found that 54% of participants said they are either "willing" or "eager" when asked what they think about "telling others about Jesus Christ."

However, 52% of Americans who identify as Christian believe that encouraging someone to change their religious beliefs is "offensive and disrespectful," and 66% of Christians are not familiar with any "methods for telling others about Jesus."

Sixty-eight percent of respondents believe that "it is the responsibility of the pastor to equip the congregation to share the Gospel" and 69% agree that it's "the responsibility of Christians to encourage non-Christians to trust Christ as their savior."

However, the survey revealed that 70% of Christians have not shared with a stranger how to become a Christian in the past six months.

While 93% say they are "at least somewhat open to having a conversation about faith with a friend," only 52% "shared a story in the last six months about what God has done in their life with a friend or family member who was not a Christian."



Continued on next page...

Additionally, 57% say they have not "invited an unchurched friend or family member to attend a church service or some other program at church in the past six months." And 62% say they have not "shared with a friend or family member how to become a Christian in the past six months."

Scott McConnell, the executive director of Lifeway Research, believes there are some Christians who might avoid evangelizing because doing so could be viewed as unkind, and they want to be perceived as loving.

"For some Christians, their love for others compels them to suggest this offensive thought. For others, this discourages them from speaking up about what they believe," McConnell surmised in a statement.

He said it's a "bold idea to encourage someone to consider converting the center of their life to be Jesus Christ."

While many Christians don't seem to be evangelizing to friends and family, 64% "have prayed for the salvation of a friend or family member in the past month." "Praying for someone to follow Christ comes more easily than talking with someone about it," McConnell said. "It isn't clear if the proverbial cat has the tongue of some Christians or if they're not connecting with non-Christians in settings where these conversations can take place."

When broken down by racial demographics, the survey's findings suggest that black Christians were more likely to share their faith with unbelievers than white Christians in the past six months.

The findings revealed that half of the white Christian population surveyed (50%) answered that they did not engage in any faith-based conversations with family or friends in the past six months.

About 32% of African American respondents said they didn't hold any conversations about faith with a friend or family member who is an unbeliever in the past six months.

The survey found that white respondents (64%) were more likely than African American respondents (52%) to say they didn't share "how to become a Christian" with a friend or family member.

A higher percentage of African Americans (56%) say that they would be "very open" to holding a conversation with a friend about their faith if given the opportunity. A lower percentage of white Christians (44%) say they would be "very open" to sharing their faith with a friend.

Additionally, 42% of African American respondents said they are "very open" to having a conversation about faith with someone they have never met before than whites (30%) and Hispanics (31%).

"Many Christians say they agree sharing their faith is important," McConnell continued. "But many also need encouragement and to be shown how to share the good news about Jesus Christ with others."

A higher percentage of white respondents (38%) said they did not pray for salvation for any loved ones, while 24% of black respondents said that they didn't engage in any salvation-focused prayers on behalf of their friends or relatives.

John Sorensen, president of Evangelism Explosion (EE), a ministry that trains people on how to share their faith in Christ, said many people are willing to share the Christian faith. Still, not many take the initiative to do so. "Now, perhaps more than ever, people are open to conversations about faith, yet this study reveals few Christians actually take the opportunity to engage in personal evangelism," Sorensen noted. "Our mission at EE is to equip followers of Jesus to have the confidence to share the Gospel naturally, lovingly and intentionally with family, friends and yes, even strangers, which is why we wanted insights on the evangelistic attitudes of Christians. We imagine a world where every believer is a witness for Christ to His glory."





STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE

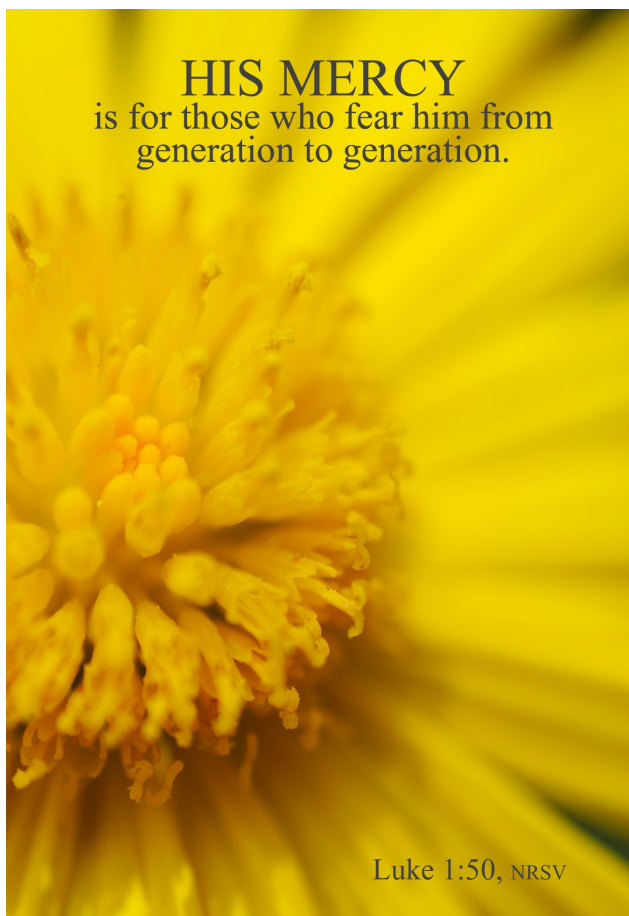
It is now August and next month and those following we will begin to see our northern friends returning and also begin seeing the fall migration of newcomers to our area. Having lived in this area most of my life, I am of the opinion that

the fall and spring are the periods when most new residents make their appearance. Now as I look forward from our church's point of view, I ask what we can do to help ensure many of those folks find us and more importantly stay with us.

While perusing the web looking for some inspiration, I came upon an article that spoke of why we come to church and read it with interest as I wondered how that question would be answered. To my surprise what was described made sense to me. It said that people come to church for "the experience", to "connect and fellowship", to "find meaning", and to "seek respite and comfort". I then found another article, this one by Herb Miller written for "The Parish Paper" in 2009. He wrote that the 3 reasons someone chooses a particular church are "worship style", "quality of ministries", and "caring atmosphere". That pleased me because when I look at our church, I see the caring and the quality which supports the connecting, fellowship, respite, and comfort that was mentioned earlier, and take pride in that our church is great in that department. But I am not sure exactly what "worship style" describes but found it interesting that it was the first thing mentioned. And now I wonder if style is what provides the "experience"? Does anyone else wonder about this? It seems to me that we should be thinking about that to ensure that our worship "experience" will attract and then hold a younger group. I think constantly about creating a worship experience that we, meaning you and I, will be proud to pass on to those that follow.

Remember, each of us, being human, is flawed in numerous ways. But giving helps to redeem us as we work to create a better version of ourselves. So, as we think about our church and our responsibility to grow His kingdom, please pray for the wisdom to follow His path and also what part you should play in seeking His goal for us.

Dave Hoffmeyer
Stewardship & Finance



Luke 1:50, NRSV



Dottie Bridges—3rd
Connie Deatherage—7th
Fran Winslow—10th
Lois Bandt-Weber—12th
Moe Bittle—16th
Wally Klee, Jr.—17th
Sue Hammond—20th
Judy Scott—20th
Dave Hillhouse—24th
Dick Sapp—26th
Phil Beahm—27th
Kris Ogden—27th
Pat Brigham—31st



John & Peggy Ernest—1st
Herb & Jackie Nicklas—3rd
Marvin & Shirley Robertson—3rd
Roger & Jan Bass—6th
Al & Rose Rode—6th
Dave & Geri Hillhouse—15th
Wallace & Daisy Hoffman—18th
Dave Hoffmeyer & Rosie Hawthorne—22nd
Harvey & Peach Pierce—29th
Dana & Pat Brigham—31st



Last
Friday
Women's
Breakfast

August 26th at 8:30am
at Wolfys in Leesburg



Pastor Dave Dorst
Pastor John Fraser
Pastor Rick Rosenkrans
Bill Frakes (2024)
Jack Homoney (2023)
Wally Klee, Sr. (2023)
Kris Ogden (2024)
Marvin Pool (2023)
Shelby Reed (2024)
Al Rode, Jr. (2023)
Jim Teets (2024)



Prayer Time with Pastor John

Is temporarily on hiatus until September.
Please continue to pray from home.

We would love to pray for you!
GraceEPCLeesburg@gmail.com
(352) 552-0052.



The Widow's Luncheon will be on hiatus for the months of July and August. We will resume on September 15th.

Have a great summer!!



Roy & Robin Pauley

Roy and Robin Pauley live in the Royal Highlands community. Robin was born and raised in Baltimore, MD. She started working after 1 year of community college. Roy was born in Spencer E. VA and his family moved to Baltimore when he was 6 months old. He went to work right out of high school. They both grew up in Abbott Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, so they have known each other forever! But one year, in 1977, they were both at their church summer camp, where Roy was a counselor, and she was a dishwasher, and they became more than friends! Sparks flew around the campfire one night and the rest is history!

Robin and Roy have 2 children. Sharon lives in Baltimore, married to Rob and they have 3 boys. Matthew is engaged to Lauren and they have wedding plans for June 25. Lauren has 2 girls. They live on the outskirts of Baltimore.

Roy was a Baltimore County Fire Fighter for 32 years. In addition to that, he had many, many side jobs, most involving driving. He drove an oil truck, a pool truck, a school bus, a shuttle at a college, a shuttle at a retirement community. Robin has had many jobs over the years, starting with waitressing, then working in offices. After the children, she went to work at their school. She was a pre-school and kindergarten aide for 8 years. She then became the church secretary at Abbott Church where they grew up. She left that job when their first grandson was born and cared for him full time. That grew into "Oma's Day Care". There were days when she had 6 kids under the age of 5, including Al and Rose Rode's grandchildren.

Roy and Robin have always loved Florida and thought they might be snowbirds one day. They never thought they would live here full time. Thirty years ago, they were looking for a house in Baltimore and their good friends, Al and Rose Rode called them, to tell them the house next door to the Rode's was going up for sale. Roy and Robin looked at it that same day and signed the papers becoming next door neighbors to the Rodes. Fast forward to 2021, Al called them to tell them the house next door to them in Royal Highlands was going up for sale. He asked the owner to not put it on the market as he knew someone who might be interested Robin and Roy flew down the next week and signed the papers! They hurriedly sold their condo and most of their belongings and moved down last October!

Robin's hobbies have included reading, jigsaw puzzles, diamond dot painting, card making, cross stitch, baking, cooking and shopping for bargains. Roy enjoys talk radio and 60's folk music and couponing! She says he enjoys TV, especially baseball games and Andy Griffith shows. Together, they enjoyed Southern Gospel concerts, dinner theaters and local college plays in Baltimore.

Robin says it was great to have a built-in church when they moved down here and thanks Al and Rose. They love everyone they have met and have already made some wonderful friends. They are excited to be coming in at a time of building a new building and can't wait to see what the future holds! Robin adds: But at least we know Who holds the future. They are thankful for the warm welcoming into the Grace family.



Musings on Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Surrender by Elder Pat Byrnes

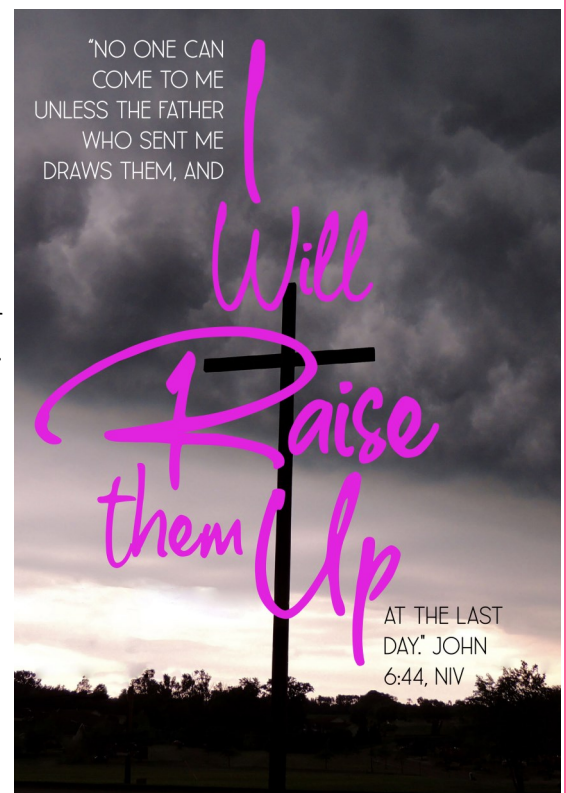
The last topic of our Villagers small group before our summer break was a Ligonier lesson series by Dr. R. C. Sproul on one of the foundations of our reformed theology. The question posed by the sub-title is "Did we choose God or did He choose us". Several foundational verses are:

- John 6:44 (Jesus said) *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.*
- John 6:65 *And He (Jesus) said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."*
- Romans 8:29 *For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.*

There is certainly a lot to unpack here and that is the substance of the dozen individual sessions given by Dr. Sproul in this particular series. It is not my intention to go into it in any further detail except to focus on one point Dr. Sproul made that struck me deeply enough to have it stirring around in my head ever since.

Dr. Sproul divided his explanation of this matter into two segments. The first is about God's sovereignty. The Bible is chock full of support for the eternal sovereignty of God over all creation and all that happens throughout His creation. If God chooses us (draws us to himself as a first step) then He is exercising His sovereignty over who is saved to eternal life. If, as some say, we decide for ourselves and choose him, then by definition, we would be exercising our sovereignty over the matter of our salvation. So, either God is entirely sovereign or He is not but we cannot both be sovereign. For me, then, the matter is settled. In fact, Dr. Sproul spends only one lesson on the sovereignty issue because it is pretty straight forward.

Dr. Sproul then launches into the next seven or eight lessons on the matter of the impact of **the FALL** of Adam and Eve on the ability (or rather inability) of their descendants to desire the things of God and take the steps to seek and choose God of their own volition (free will). A key point of this impact is the matter of **AUTONOMY**. He likens it to the original sin of pride which begets the desire for autonomy. Satan tempted Eve and then Adam with the idea that if they ate of the forbidden fruit, they would become like God and that is autonomous. It says, I am in charge of myself, I will decide for myself, I and I alone will determine how I will respond to information and the influences of good and evil. This of course was the original sin of Satan of whom it is written (Isaiah 14:12-14) "*How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.*" That's Satan speak for I will make myself autonomous, no longer subject to the sovereignty of God.



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A case can be made for this very state... the state of autonomy with which he tempted Adam and Eve. And this is their legacy to all mankind descended from them.

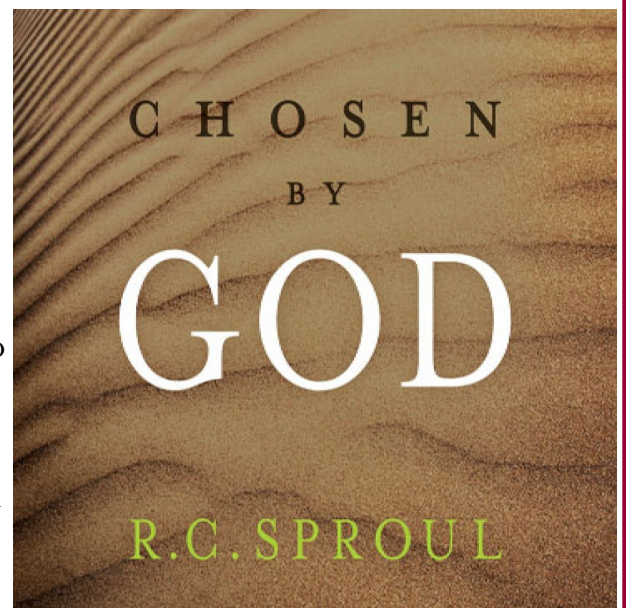
We know there is a root of original sin in all humans after the fall and from that root comes all manner of unrighteousness and sin. We see it expressed today in two major initiatives of our left wing culture... the right to choose to terminate life by abortion and the right to ignore God's creative choice and choose our own gender. Humans by (their fallen) nature want to be autonomous.

If that is true (and I think it is) then we can also fall prey to that natural desire to be autonomous. Of the many expressions of re-establishing a relationship with God by recognizing His sovereignty, the one that addresses this natural desire is **SURRENDER**. I am sure you have heard many born again Christians say they "surrendered their lives to Christ". What exactly did they (do we) surrender? It is our desire for autonomy... to be sovereign over ourselves and the outcomes of our lives. We can think of sanctification as the progressive tamping down that human natural desire and replacing it with willful submission to the sovereignty of God. Of course, we can do this only with the calling of God through His Holy Spirit and the continuing empowering of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

I don't know about you, but I have a hard time sometimes coming up with things to confess during that segment of our worship service. Certainly, from time to time, things come up like harsh words spoken in anger that week or failure to respond properly to a loved one or neighbor. But we don't kill or steal (although we might covet something). But for sure, we have a fallen nature that includes the desire for autonomy and that is something to always confess and repent of. Expressions of this are often written in the bulletin prayers of confession acknowledging our failure to put God first, our drifting back and forth from our human root sin instincts.

As for Satan, how did his plan (Isaiah 14) turn out? Total defeat! But God in His infinite wisdom channels Satan's impulses for His own Holy purposes. Satan is in fact one of the all things that David wrote about in Psalm 119:91... *for all things are your servants*. So, far from becoming the autonomous entity he desired to be, Satan is God's servant bound to get permission for everything.

Our surrender places us in the role of servants as well. Let's confess and repent and serve Him with all our heart and soul and might.



August 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 John & Peggy Ernest Anniversary	2 8:00am Perkins Men's Bible Study	3 Dottie Bridges Birthday Herb & Jackie Nicklas Anniversary Marvin & Shirley Robertson Anniversary	4	5	6 Roger & Jan Bass Anniversary Al & Rose Rode Anniversary
7 Communion Sunday 9:00am Sunday School 9:45am Coffee & Fellowship 10:30am Worship Connie Deatherage Birthday	8	9 8:00am Perkins Men's Bible Study	10 Fran Winslow Birthday	11 10:00am Finance Committee Meeting	12 Lois Bandt-Weber Birthday	13
14 9:00am Sunday School 9:45am Coffee & Fellowship 10:30am Worship	15 Dave & Geri Hillhouse Anniversary	16 8:00am Perkins Men's Bible Study 10:00am Session Meeting Moe Birtle Birthday	17 Wally Klee, Jr. Birthday	18 Wallace & Daisy Hoffman Anniversary	19	20 Sue Hammond Judy Scott Birthdays
21 9:45am Coffee & Fellowship 10:30am Worship	22 Dave Hoffmeyer & Rosie Hawthorne Anniversary	23 8:00am Perkins Men's Bible Study	24 Dave Hillhouse Birthday	25	26 8:30am Women's Breakfast Dick Sapp Birthday	27 Phil Beahm Kris Ogden Birthdays
28 9:45am Coffee & Fellowship 10:30am Worship	29 Harvey & Peach Pierce Anniversary	30 8:00am Perkins Men's Bible Study	31 Pat Brigham Birthday Dana & Pat Brigham Anniversary			

STAND



FIRM

2023 Ligonier National Conference

March 23-25, 2023

Orange County Convention Center, Orlando

Speakers include: W. Robert Godfrey, Stephen Nichols, Burk Parsons, Derek Thomas, Harry Reeder, Sinclair Ferguson, Voddie Baucham, Ken Jones, Steven Lawson, Michael Reeves

For additional information go to www.Ligonier.org



Join us on **Friday, September 9th at 7:00pm** for a lovely evening of music with Vickie Truett. It will be at Grace Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Please bring a friend, or two!

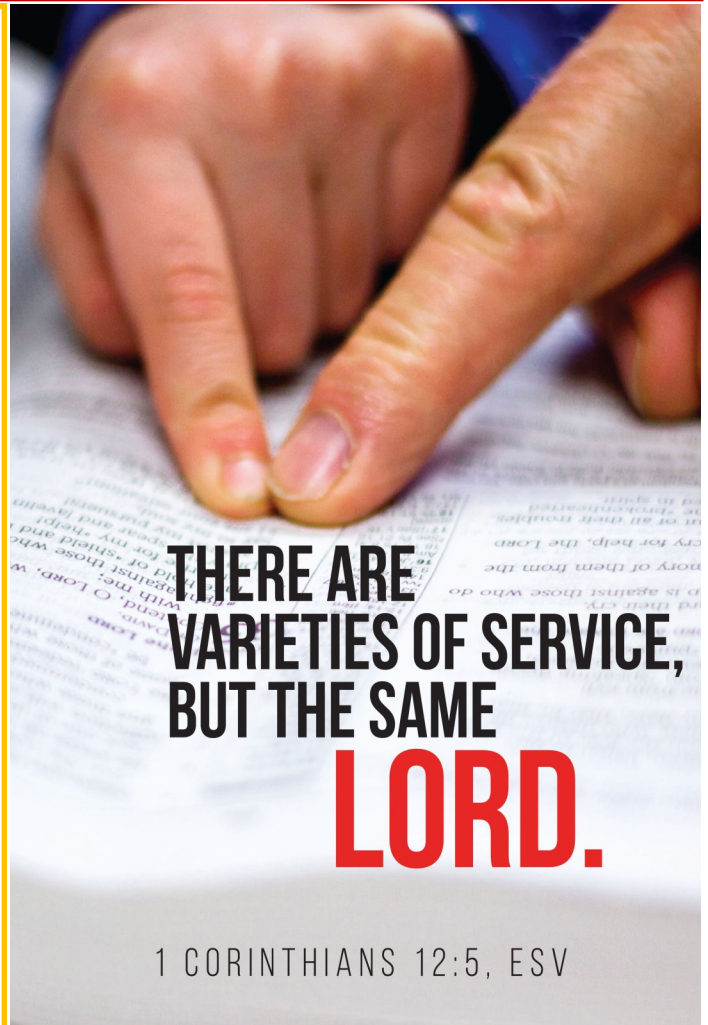
We will take up a love offering if you would like to contribute.

To see more about Vickie Truett, visit www.VickieTruett.com

August Sermon Schedule The Corinthian Correspondence

- Aug 7th** The Lord's Supper
- Aug 14th** Understanding Spiritual Gifts
- Aug 21st** The Love Chapter
- Aug 28th** Prophecy and Tongues

*Love
never
fails.*
1 Corinthians 13:8, NIV



**THERE ARE
VARIETIES OF SERVICE,
BUT THE SAME
LORD.**

1 CORINTHIANS 12:5, ESV

Christian Care Center sends many thanks to the Prayer Shawl Ministry for all the blankets donated. They are blessed to be able to use them not only as blankets but to help as breast feeding covers. What a blessing!



Blessings from the Prayer Shawl Ministry

"Thus says the Lord of hosts, render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another,"
Zechariah 7:9

It's been a long hot summer but those needles are still going clicky clack as our Prayer Shawl ladies work to increase our supply of lapghans. As our inventory is increased, we will have a blessing in church. We will then package our lapghans, include a message of encouragement, and label them for further distribution to the congregation and the community at large.

Our lapghans are carefully put together. A cross is sewn on the lapghan as a reminder of Christ Jesus eternal love.

Thank you so much Grace EPC for your support of the Prayer Shawl Mission enabling us to place a lapghan in the hands of someone who is in need of encouragement and the knowledge that God is with them.

I encourage you to let the committee know of anyone you know who are in need of knowing they are loved. with friends ever close to them. Cards are in the back of the pews, Place your request for a lapghan in the offering plate and we will honor your request, or you make speak to a committee member who will help you find a lapghan.

Blessings from The Prayer Shawl Committee
Molly Bod, Mary Burton Alice Crotty, Connie Detherage, Gail Edelman, Jill Fraser, Jean Howse-Henke, Lois Schielke, Judy Scott, Shirley Robertson





Worship: 700 S. 9th St., Leesburg, FL

Mailing: P. O. Box 490001

Leesburg, FL 34749

352-552-0052

Rev. Dr. Dave Dorst

Email: graceepclesburg@gmail.com

Website: GraceEPC.church

Like us on Facebook: Grace EPC

All activities are tentative and subject to change.

SUNDAYS:

- 9:00 AM ~ Sunday School (8/7 & 8/14)
- 9:45 AM ~ Fellowship Time
- 10:30 AM ~ Worship Service

MONDAYS:

TUESDAYS:

- 8:00 AM ~ Men's Bible Study & Breakfast @ Perkins
- 10:00 AM ~ Session Meeting (8/16)

WEDNESDAYS:

- 4:30 PM ~ No Choir Rehearsal (Will be off the months of July & August)

THURSDAYS:

- 10:00 AM ~ Stewardship & Finance Committee Meeting (8/11)

FRIDAYS:

- 8:30 AM ~ Last Friday Women's Breakfast (8/26) ~ *Wolfy's*