

NEWSLINE

Great Smoky Mountains Church of Christ

Al Behel, Minister
abehel@ix.netcom.com

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A Divisive Spirit

The story is told of three churches located on the same block in a certain city. These churches had developed such contempt and hatred for each other that they were constantly trying to find some way to undermine the efforts of their competitors. One Sunday each church opened worship with a rousing song service. It was a hot summer day and all windows were raised and doors were opened. The first congregation began by singing loudly, "Will There Be Any Stars In My Crown?" The second congregation answered with, "No, Not One, No, Not One!" Not to be outdone, the third congregation joined in with, "Oh, That Will Be Glory For Me!"

Jesus proclaimed a universal truth when he said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand" (Mark 3:25). This is certainly true of the church, the family of God. Christians united in Christ form a mighty army against the forces of evil. Division within the ranks weakens the church at its core. Satan fears unity and champions conflict and division among God's people. A fragmented brotherhood leaves us vulnerable to his attempts to break our spirits.

The same is true among individual Christians in local church families. Paul cautioned the Corinthians against divisions and divided loyalties. He reprimanded them for the jealousy and strife which existed in their fellowship (I Corinthians 3:1-4). When Christians bicker, backbite, slander, gossip, and denigrate one another Satan laughs and enjoys his day. Furthermore, there are several devastating effects which destroy the purposes of God in our lives.

First, division and conflict elevates self-will above God's will. Those who engage in unloving actions or conversations about fellow Christians care more for themselves than for the church, or for the souls of others. These "Christians" are like children who point their fingers at each other when their unacceptable behaviors are called into account by their parents.

Secondly, other Christians are discouraged and disheartened by these insensitive and carnal acts. Church growth is stifled by disharmony among brethren. Evangelism suffers because energy is lost in finding fault with others instead of sharing the love of God. If we don't love our brothers and sisters how can we love the lost outside of Christ?

Thirdly, such behaviors encourage Satan to keep attacking. As long as he is successful in turning our energies on one another he is winning and will escalate his efforts. He cheers when he sees the house of God divided and falling because of the selfish and childish attitudes of Christians.

The apostle of love reminds us that loving God and loving one another are co-dependent variable. Our love grows in both directions as we stop looking at self and look to Jesus (I John 4).

— Al Behel

Mark Your Calendars: October 4-6—Brad Harrub will be with us for a weekend series on Creation/Evolution and related topics. This is an opportunity to reach out to our community. Our members are asked to select topics of interest and return them to Gary Dick or one of the elders by March 20.

Libby and Larry Gilley, friends of **Dwight Grizzell**, needs our prayers. Libby has a recurrence of breast cancer which has metastasized in her abdomen. The Gilleys have been close friends of Dwight's for many years. They live in Chattanooga.

Jean Compton has been struggling with health issues. Keep her in prayer.

Sermon Topics: A.M.—"Our Unshakable Faith, No. 9—"From Adam to Noah"; P.M.—"Great Stories of the Bible: King David, No. 2"

Other Prayer Needs

Jan Messick received good news regarding PET scan—She is Cancer Free! Keep praying!

Betty Langdon, Ginny Cliett's sister, is now in rehab following shoulder surgery.

Rose Parker, daughter-in-law of Ray and Faye Parker, Hatton, AL, is suffering from leukemia. Ray and Faye will be spending a lot of time in Pigeon Forge.

Jennifer Fulk, 39 yr old daughter of Billy and Barbara Helms (frequent visitors from Milton, FL) recurrence of cancer.

Afghanistan—Bryan Darilek, Major, U.S. Army, in a 9 month deployment. He is the son-in-law of Rick and Ginny Cliett and husband of Laura. Woody Chambers, cousin of Rick Cliett, is also deployed.

Bob Klingerman (Al & Linda's daughter's father-in-law) is in Shannondale Rehab Center with complications from a fall. He has Parkinson's and is struggling a great deal.

Judy Lassetter fell last week on some stairs and fractured her shoulder—she is in a sling and on medication for the pain.

Baptism: Marc Wiles, Jr., was baptized into Christ last Sunday night. Marc is the son of Marc and Tennille Wiles. We welcome him into God's family. The Wiles live at 2149 Ridge Rd., #5, Pigeon Forge 37863. Marc prefers to be called "Junior".

Sunday Adult Bible Class
The Holy Spirit

Next Book of The Month Meeting—Mar. 29, 7-9 pm
Book: Ezekiel

Times of Services

Sunday A.M.
Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Sunday P.M. 6:00 PM
Wednesday 7:00 PM

Our Known Sick

Dez Anderson—MS and several other health problems. She has been having increasing difficulty in recent weeks. Please keep her in prayer. Cards are appropriate and encouraging.

Johnny Bryan—continues to need our prayers.

Debby Bryan—battling cancer.

Clara Mayberry—at home.

Christopher Howell, 23 year-old son of Phil and Terrie Howell and grandson of the Littletons, - spinal cord injuries in an auto accident

Brenda Scott's sister, **Arania Blount**, is improving following stomach surgery in Dayton, OH.

Coleen Thomason's mother is in Ben Atchley Veteran's Home.

Angie Daimwood is in Memory Care, Rm. 401, Wellington Place.

Bill England has bone cancer and needs our continued prayers.

Regen Morris, 11 year old student at Phi Beta Phi (son of Dan and Tisha Morris) is in St. Jude's in Memphis with brain cancer.

Deb Elkins is recovering from knee surgery.

Bottles of Love: Please turn in today. Thanks to everyone who has participated.

Building Fund

Loan balance as of 02/15/13 is **\$1,214,158.20**. Extra contributions to reduce the loan debt are needed and appreciated. Envelopes are available in the pew.

Nursery

Located across main foyer. Closed circuit TV allows viewing and participation in worship.

CDs and DVDs of Sermons are available free at sound booth. Also available on the website at: www.greatsmokymountainschurchofchrist.com.