

# NEWSLINE

## Great Smoky Mountains Church of Christ

Al Behel, Minister  
abehel@ix.netcom.com

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### A New Year—New Opportunities

One of the staple foods on the farm was black-eyed peas. That made it easy for us to join an age old tradition on New Year's Day. It was hard to beat "soupy" black-eyed peas and hot cornbread. I'm still not sure about the "good luck" part of that tradition. One thing was sure, though; we knew that each year brought new opportunities and new challenges.

The New Year is marked around the world with some kind of traditional celebration. The Japanese eat long noodles. The Greeks bake a special bread. In Spain, the custom is to eat 12 grapes in the seconds leading up to the New Year. Some Americans relish cabbage, herring, honey, sardines, and salt. According to archeologists, the tradition of eating certain foods to bring good luck dates back to the Babylonian empire.

I don't think we need good *luck*. We need the *favor* of our God whose guidance ensures a solid path. Jeremiah found that to be true. In a difficult time in Israel's history, God's Word produced hope and purpose in his heart. His summary is clear, "*Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart*" (Jer. 15:16). The psalmist found God's words to be "*sweeter than honey*" (Psalm 119:103). We don't need black-eyed peas. We need something better than that.

God reminds us that he does not look on time the way we do. One day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. His focus is eternal and is not measured in days, months, or years. And our place in God's plan must not be limited by time or place or things.

Sometimes we question God because we can't see far enough. We look at suffering and pain, at abused and hungry children. We look at cruelty and heartache and despair. We cry out and ask "why?". We ask why God doesn't act, why He doesn't relieve the hurt. The answer comes back, "*I made you. I made you to make a difference, to lift burdened hearts, and to meet each other's needs. I made you to be My hands and feet and My heart. I made you so I could love through you.*"

This is a new year and we will have new challenges and opportunities. In those moments God expects us to make a difference. He will bless others with "good things" through you and through me. It will not be through black-eyed peas, or cabbage...it will be through *us*.

— Al Behel

### Other News/Sick:

**Sympathy:** To **Francis Laney** in the death of her husband, **Bill Laney**, who passed away Saturday morning around 1 a.m. Bill and Francis have been very dear to our church family. Bill had a heart condition and was scheduled to have a valve replacement later this month. His funeral will be in Mount Juliet. We will give you details as we have them.

**Sympathy:** To **Bill England** in the death of his brother, **Ike**, who passed away on Christmas Day. The funeral was last week.

**Tyler Behel**, Al's nephew, has been re-deployed to Afghanistan.

**Paul Huston**, son-in-law of Gary and Priscilla Dick, deployed to Egypt for one year. Prayers appreciated.

**Ladies Bible Class:** 1st and 3rd Tuesdays in Fellowship Hall. Next study Jan. 6 at 10 a.m.

**Meetings Today:** Men and Ladies will have their meetings today at 4 p.m.

**Rick Cliett** will speak for us on Sunday night, January 11. It is good to have him back from Malaysia.

**Elder Contact for Month:** Marc Hayes, Phone No. 1-731-608-4148

*Sermon Topics: A.M. - "Vessels of Clay"; P.M. - At Home In The Psalms (Cont.)*

Interpreter for deaf and hearing impaired available for AM and PM worship

### Our Known Sick

**-Dez Anderson**— fell recently and suffered a lot of pain. She continues to battle multiple health issues and her activity level is very limited. Keep praying...God is listening and answering.

**-Sheryle Elkins**—good news! CT scan shows the tumor in her lung has shrunk by 90%. We rejoice and give God thanks! She is battling inflammation in her lung caused by the radiation. Keep praying. Her address is: 1383 Lake Front Drive, Dandridge, TN 37725.

**-Bill Green** is now suffering from a sore on his heel and is confined to home.

**-Sue Mercer**—continuing to recover from surgery to remove a malignant kidney. She is doing well.

**-Raelynn Bryant**, newborn baby daughter of Steven and Taylor Bryant, is still hospitalized but is improving significantly.

**-Kathy May**—ill in Baxter. You can send her a card at P.O. Box 465, Baxter, TN 38544-0463.

**-Patty Adair**—recovering from back surgery. Back with us.

**-Pauline Swallow** has not been feeling well. Keep her in prayer.

### Friends and Family

**-Mrs. Florence Tolliver** is in Ft. Sanders Nursing Home, Rm 172. Her daughter, Rita Taylor from Kodak, has been visiting with us.

**-Jim Dickson** (he and Barbara have worked at Dollywood and worshipped with us several years) has a recurrence of lung cancer and is being treated with chemotherapy. Jim and Barbara live at 521 Green Hills Dr., Hattiesburg, MS 39402. Phone: 601-296-1547.

**-Scottie Elkins**, Tom and Deb's grandson, is still awaiting tests to determine if he has MS. Prayers are requested for him.

**-Tom Elkin's brother** in rehab following a four-wheeler accident.

**-Christopher Howell**-grandson of the Littletons-spinal cord injuries.

**-Connie Browning**, Sue Mercer's sister—breast cancer.

**-Jerry Ellison**, Brenda Scott's brother-in-law, failing lungs.

**-Robin McCollum and Peggy McCollum** (Al's nieces-battling cancer)

**-Al's brother, Tom Behel**, - improving from post-operative stroke and broken femur. Still having minimal speech.

**-Debbie Little**, mother of one of Marti's students, is suffering from a brain aneurysm rupture. Debbie is home and greatly improved. The family appreciates your prayers and cards. Their address is: Debbie, Randy, Michael, & Katie Little, 4152 Briggs Loop, Kodak, TN 37764. Please drop a note.

**-Peggy Neff**, friend of Rick & Ginny, battling metastasized cancer.

**-Allen McCord**, friend of Rick & Ginny—acute Leukemia and intensive chemotherapy for the remainder of January.

### Exploring The Life of Joseph

*K-Teen, Winter Sunday School  
Fellowship Hall—9:30 a.m.  
Teens as Teacher's Aids  
Mark Haynes, Director*

Adult Class

*Colossians—Al Behel*

### 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

### Building Fund

Loan balance as of 12/04/14 is **\$1,107,602.13**. 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](http://www.greatsmokymountainschurchofchrist.com).