

NEWSLINE

Great Smoky Mountains Church of Christ

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Vol. XX. No. 09

February 28, 2016

THE HEART OF A FATHER

I've often wondered how my parents could deal with the illness and death of my nine year old brother. I was too young to appreciate their loss at the time. Through the years, however, I listened to their hearts. Sure, they had eight other children, but that didn't take away the pain for the loss of that one son.

God is portrayed in Scripture as a Father who also has a broken heart for every child of His who is being destroyed by sin. His heart aches for those who have given Satan a foothold in their lives, for those who have given up their place at His table and left the fellowship of a loving family.

Our Father was faced with a strange dilemma. In order to save His other children from death He had to sacrifice another Son. A Son He loved dearly. A Son without sin of His own, but one who shared the Father's concern for all mankind. A Son who would come into our world and be killed by the very people He came to save.

The parable of the "Prodigal Son" ends as a parable of the "Loving Father" (Luke 15). That father never quit waiting and watching for his son's return. His heart never wanted to give up. Even though his son had broken ties, wasted hard-earned money on sinful living, rejected all the values his parents had taught him, still that father waited and prayed for his return. Everyone else could give up, but not him. His was the heart of a father.

Our Father's heart doesn't want to give up, either. He waits. He watches. He sends messengers and invites us to return. He keeps on giving and sending us gifts. Day after day, He sends us gifts of His love. His love never dies.

Many have never known a father's loving heart. They are victims of abuse and neglect. They suffer many scars. Just so, many have never accepted God as Father. They continue to chose a surrogate father, one who glories in their fate, who delights in their pain, and abuses them for his own pleasure. He promises happiness and fulfillment, but his promises are empty. He leaves them alone. The wounds Satan inflicts upon his victims are deep. The scars are hard to remove.

But God, "Who is rich in mercy", rescued us from imminent danger and from ultimate death. He has given us a second chance. We have a choice. We don't have to return to sin and it's destructive power. Yet, God will not force a decision. He only extends a loving heart. It's up to us to respond to that heart. That heart is the heart of a Father! The heart of a *Father!*

— Al Behel

Other News:

-Ladies Tea and Regular Meetings: All ladies are invited to a tea next Sunday and the ladies group has requested that our monthly meetings be change to 3-5 pm. The men will be invited to join the ladies at 5 p.m. for "leftovers." The ladies will have an opportunity to see all the projects they have underway and decide which ones you would like to be involved in.

-Ladies Bible Class—first and third Tuesdays in Fellowship Hall at 10 a.m. Polly Cline is leading a study on "Hunger in my Soul".

Food Contact For Month: Leah Turner, Back up Patty Adair

Elder Contact for Month: Marc Hayes, phone: 1-731-608-4148

Sermon Topics: A.M. — "Walking By Faith, Can You Walk Through Disappointments?" P.M.— "When Storms Come"

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

Our Known Sick

-Dez Anderson— still suffering with multiple health issues. Keep praying. God is listening and answering.

-Sheryle Elkins— is continuing chemotherapy on a periodic basis for treatment of lung cancer.

-Bill Valentine is recovering from esophageal cancer surgery. We rejoice with him that all indicators are good.

-Bill Green—suffering from several health issues. Cards would mean a lot to him.

-Jean Compton—is recovering at home.

-Kathy May battling ongoing health issues. She is still in Baxter.

-Pauline Swallow is dealing with cancer. Keep praying for her.

-Jerry and Jeanette Dyer— they face several challenges.

-Patty Adair is having hyperbaric treatment for a leg infection. She is getting positive results.

-Madison Barnett-improving from kidney stones. Other tests scheduled. Also, Helen requested prayers for other family members. Their son is in MD Anderson in Houston for tests due to spial fluid leakage from 2nd tumor cells they could not remove due to the location on the optic nerve. Larry is scheduled to see an orthopedic doctor on the 15th to see what can be done to relieve his pain.

Polly Cline received a good report from her eye doctor. No more injections at this time! Next visit is scheduled for June. We give God glory.

Friends and Family News

-Joyce Keyser's cousin, **Maegan White**, recovering from brain surgery.

-Sue Hayes sister, Joyce, recovering from a fall.

-Pat Thomas, friend of Linda Valentine and other members here, had bladder cancer surgery recently. Pat lives in Brentwood, TN.

-Brenda Scott's niece, **Nita Watern**, -liver cancer and is receiving chemotherapy. She lives in New Madison, Ohio.

-Judy Watkins, Rick's sister in Texas, is improved.

-Dee Lewis, friend of the Clietts, stage four cancer (6th occurrence)

-John Devore's (Linda Goodnight's husband) **daughter**, who was severely injured in an auto accident recently, is out of ICU and now in rehab and beginning to walk again. Prayers appreciated.

-Randy Moore, brother of Tina Yates, suffering from kidney disease and on dialysis—Tina is very close to her brother and appreciates prayers for him.

Special Events

Men's Prayer Session
Monday mornings at 8:30

Wednesday Night

Danny Cline leading a study—*"They Met the Messiah in Mark"*

Sunday Adult Class

2 Thessalonians—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 02/02/16 is **\$1,037,578.48**. Extra contributions to reduce the loan debt are needed and appreciated. Envelopes are available in the pews.

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