


**Westminster
Baptist
Church**

**The
Witness**

August/September 2015

Volume 42 Issue 4



Saturday, August 29

11:00 am - 4:00 pm

*Hamburgers and hot dogs will be provided.

The church family is asked to bring a dish to share as follows:

A-H: Dessert

I-Q: Drinks & Chips

R-Z: Salads



We are happy to announce that all meals packed at WILLET'S Spring Meal Packing Tour have landed safely and will be distributed in Uganda and Mozambique. Thanks to all who supported our efforts.



*A Loss in
Our Church Family*

Our dear sister, *Joyce Radcliffe* went home to heaven on June 19, 2015. She will be missed by her church family as well as her family that was left behind.

Hitting Hard. Digging Deep. All 4 Christ

**BALTIMORE
BRAVEHEARTS**

Thank you for your generosity regarding the use of your gym. We are very grateful!

Making Positive Changes in Worship and Missions

Change many times is difficult for us. It brings out fear, anxiety, and it usually costs something. But change CAN be a positive thing if viewed with the right perspective, bathed in prayer and acted on with faith.

One of the changes coming our way at Westminster Baptist, will be a major upgrade to our Multi-Purpose Room. Beginning the end of August, we will be making improvements to our sound and lighting issues by installing acoustic sound panels, and adding much better lighting for the congregation and stage area. We will also have a new projector and sound board. Many connections that were not working on stage have already been fixed or will be during this upgrade process.

We are tentatively looking to move the contemporary service to the MP Room by late September as long as everything remains on schedule.

The plan all along was to do this as God provided financially, so we would not need to take from the general budget to do so. **And that's exactly what God has done!** through several anonymous contributors. I am pleased to announce we are able to pay in full for all of the positive changes and all of these changes are for the glory of God!

We are also making positive change in how we approach missions. With the leadership of Joel Rainey, who has coached and encouraged us in discussions about Haiti, we have been affirmed in the direction and strategies we are taking for our long term commitment to Macaty, Haiti. To educate all of us more on how Mid-Atlantic Baptists are approaching mission work, and how your gifts and skills can be used, we are co-hosting, a workshop with Manchester Baptist, on Saturday, September 26. More details will be coming on this event.

Many thanks to the children, parents, and grandparents that helped bring in over 700 supply items during VBS for the children of Macaty, Haiti. We are also making skirts and shorts to take with us.

One of my goals as Mission Director has been to personalize our mission efforts. I want us to know our missionaries better. I want us to pray more and to be more involved churchwide both locally and globally. We will continue to hold quarterly TIP(Together in Prayer) services. And we look forward to hearing more of our missionaries come and speak and share their stories throughout the year when available.

Our world is rapidly changing around us. Our message has not and will not change. But the methods and strategies we use to reach others for Jesus Christ must change.

God gets all the glory for these positive changes! For He alone is worthy of ALL of our praise.



Editor's Note: We are using the interview format to facilitate the sharing of a very personal testimony from one of our church family. Alex Jones

His Choice

Mrs. Pat Ruchlewicz

A.J. Pat, you have shared some of your challenges to your faith in our Sunday school class. What would you like our readers to know about your current situation? **P.R.** I'm dealing with Glioblastoma, cancer of the Glial cells, a very aggressive form of brain cancer in adults. In a way, it's like a virus in that it mutates with each new chemo.

A.J. This sounds very serious. **P.R.** It is. The average person survives approximately 18 months after diagnosis. When the tumor can be surgically removed, as mine was, radiation and chemotherapies are started to prevent recurrence. Research shows that absence of tumor growth after surgery effects survival time. The hope is for patients to be tumor free for at least 6 months. Mine came back in 4 months. The current statistics show that less than 3% of those with this diagnosed live for 5 years.

A.J. Has your ability to function been effected? **P.R.** Yes. My cancer is in the frontal lobe, so that part of my brain has been radiated, surgically disturbed, and is swollen. As a result of the physical disturbance of the brain, and the side effects of the chemo, I find myself emotionally drained and extremely tired.

A.J. How are you coping? **P.R.** When I begin to feel down, I go back to my book marked Bible verses. I've followed the directions of James, Jesus' half- brother, and I feel the support of those praying for me - my family, co-workers, friends, Sunday school and church family. Those verses remind me that nothing can separate me from God's love. God has filled me with His peace and calm about the disease. I know in my heart that God can sustain my life or He can call me home. I'm ready for either. It's His choice. While I don't want to leave my adult son and 3 adult girls, one of whom is autistic; I am becoming more confident that God will take care of my children if I am called home. It's really His choice.

A.J. It sounds like you are standing on God's promises. **P.R.** I am.

A.J. You mentioned prayers. How are they helping you? **P.R.** I don't understand how it works, but knowing that people are praying for me gives me the strength to get out of bed each day.

A.J. What would you like to share about previous challenges to your faith? **P.R.** I have been widowed twice.

A.J. How did you cope? **P.R.** It was a struggle and took time, but I chose to thank God for the 41 years of happiness, sharing my life with my husband. Many people have never had the joy of sharing life with a spouse, so how could I not be grateful for the joy God gave me?

A.J. You thanked God even in those circumstances? **P.R.** Yes, but not immediately. God held me up and was patient with me until I was strong enough to stand with His help.

A.J. Did these experiences help you with your current situation and if so, how? **P.R.** Yes. Each struggle I have faced, with God by my side, made me stronger and better able to cope when the next challenge came. I am so grateful for the people God put in my life to help me handle each struggle. These challenges gave me more confidence that God would help me handle the challenges of living with cancer. They reinforced the reality that my life is in His hands.

A.J. Pat, what thoughts do you want to share with our readers? **P.R.** *Let go and let God-take control.* Search the Bible for verses that give comfort for your situation and claim the promises found in the Word.

A.J. Thank you, Pat. I'm sure that many of our readers will begin or continue to pray for you.

"Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is anyone of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well: the Lord will raise him up." James 5:13-15 (NIV)

"Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" 1st. Thessalonians 5:15-18 (NIV)

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8; 37 ((NIV)

"The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love." Psalm 147:11 (NIV)



Women of Grace Fellowship Event

Ladies, look around you on Sunday mornings. Do you know all the faces of those attending your worship service, not to mention the other service? Now is your chance to make some new acquaintances. Our **Women of Grace** dining group, Cuisine Queens, invites you to a "Get Connected" lunch at The Gourmet Girls on Saturday, August 15, 12:00-2:00 pm. They offer specialty deli sandwiches, homemade soups, imaginative salads, and delicious bakery items. The restaurant is located at 1 Easter Court Suite D in Owings Mills, MD. Please contact Cindy Bryson at 410-967-6765 by Wednesday, August 12, if you would like to attend. Carpooling can be arranged.

Movie Recommendation – WAR ROOM

From the award-winning creators of *Fireproof* and *Courageous* comes **WAR ROOM**, a compelling drama with humor and heart that explores the power that prayer can have on marriages, parenting, careers, friendships, and every other areas of our lives. This is a powerful movie that will challenge you spiritually and touch you emotionally. The PG-rated film features New York Times best-selling author and Bible teacher Priscilla Shirer in her film debut.



The movie opens on Friday, August 28, 2015 at limited locations. The closest theaters in our area are AMC Owings Mills 17 in Owings Mills, MD, and R/C Gateway Theater 8 in Gettysburg, PA. Please check the theaters for specific show times. Advance ticket purchases can be made.

Women, we encourage you to see this movie and bring your family. This one is too good to miss!



Photo:Trounce/Wikimedia Commons

Coming this Fall - "Be Comforted - A Study of Isaiah"

The book of Isaiah contains one of the clearest expressions of the gospel in all of the Old Testament. It provides us with the most comprehensive prophetic picture of Jesus Christ and includes the full scope of His life: the announcement of His coming; His virgin birth; His proclamation of the good news; His sacrificial death; and His return to claim His own. The book stands as a testament of hope in the Lord, the One who saves His people from themselves.

Nancy Rictor will be teaching this 8-week study as a lecture followed by group discussion. (No video or lesson book will be used.) There is **no cost**; any necessary materials will be provided. Come join us! Please sign up at the Women of Grace table for a morning or evening session:

TUESDAY EVENINGS - Nancy Rictor's Home
September 22 - November 10, 7:00 - 8:30 pm

THURSDAY MORNINGS - WBC ROOM 108
September 24 - November 12, 9:30 - 11:00 am

Theological and Doctrinal Survey (Part 2): Who initiates? God or man?

For the most part, our responses to the Theological & Doctrinal Survey that was conducted a few months ago showed a sound grasp of theology and doctrine. We praise the Lord for that. However, there were a few items in the survey that were more “problematic.” It is one of those that this article will discuss. Survey item #1 stated: “A person obtains peace with God by first taking the initiative to seek God and then God responds with grace.”

Most of us (62%) agreed with that statement, whereas about half that many (33%) disagreed. And yet, there is biblical support for disagreeing with the statement.

It is possible that those who agreed with the statement may have started in the “middle of the story.” From our perspective, it might seem like we were searching for God and, praise God, we found him. Thus, it could seem like we took the initiative. However, the “story” began long before we were even born. Salvation is accomplished through the grace of *God*, who takes the initiative, and man responds *in faith*, which is itself a gift from God, “so that no man can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9). By His grace, God has offered the means to salvation for everyone through Jesus Christ. On that we agree. However, looking at humanity at large, some of us accept that offer; some do not.

There has to be a scriptural basis for saying that God is the initiator of our finding peace with Him. For the sake of space, only a few verses appear here.

[God said] "I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, 'Here am I, here am I.'" (Isaiah 65:1, Romans 10:20)

[Jesus said] "You did not choose me, but I chose you so that you might go and bear fruit," (John 15:16a)

[Jesus said] "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him." (John 6:44a)

But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved, (Eph. 2:4-5)

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

These scriptures clearly tells us that man does not initiate contact with God. Praise God that He initiated the process long, long ago.

Apologetics Ministry Team,
*Jim Reger, Lynn Johnson, Alex Jones,
Rich Poteat, & Pastor Larry Steen*



Accepting the Monster Within: The Christian Response to Indwelling Sin

I've always appreciated super hero stories (especially Marvel ones) not just because they excite my inner six year old, but because they provide a unique and fun opportunity to explore the human condition or what it means to be human. My favorite characters are not the benevolent demi-gods like Superman or the menacing villains like Dr. Doom. My preference tends to be towards the more human heroes, or often even something called antiheroes. Antiheroes are neither totally the good guys nor fully the bad guys. They are far more complicated than that and with their mixed motives, can function as the cruelest villains when their inner demons get the upper hand, and can serve as the bravest of heroes when it either benefits them or the rare instance where they are compelled to pure goodness. These characters by every measure are wicked and should be in prison, no matter how many school buses of children they save from impending doom as they have committed great atrocities typically including cold blooded murder.

In life it's very easy for us to simply see the world as a battle of good versus evil and we almost always place ourselves in the former camp as we over-simplify causes we disagree with and even teams we root against. The Christian life can especially be viewed in this lens and it can cause much discomfort and misfortune in the Christians inner most self.

Continued on p. 6...

Continued from p. 5 . . .

Every true Christian affirms that we were once the villains deserving the just punishment of our God, and Jesus became the only hero to take the punishment from God that we deserved. Jesus stood in our place and now we can live forever with God. This truth in a very real sense turns us from villains to heroes as we repent unto salvation and seek the will of God, not our own anymore, but again there is a danger of oversimplification.

We will one day indeed be without sin, it will not just be the case that God sees Jesus instead of our sins as in heaven, we will be completely made new and will be the hero like Superman. We are not however the hero when we become Christians, though as we grow in love for the Lord we start to look more and more like the good guy. We are now in this life the 'antihero' that I mentioned earlier, we are a mix of a fallen human soul that lives for itself and a the hosts of a Holy Spirit that brings us a new holy nature and helps us grow more and more in love with our savior each and every day. Christian growth can never get us to the point where we would not deserve hell if not for Christ's mercy. Christian growth inevitably reveals this reality exponentially and it can be a danger to our walk with the Lord when we don't understand it.

Theologians often talk about Christian growth as two line charts, the first is obvious but the latter is sometime missed. The first line chart of Christian growth is obviously our growth in Godliness; true Christians are always growing more and more like Christ and though they may have temporary set backs on the chart, that line is always heading in an upward trajectory. The line chart of growth in Godly character is always going up but will never reach God's perfect standards. The other line chart of Christian growth is our understanding of the distance between our sins and God's holiness and that chart is constantly heading in a downward direction for true Christians. New Christians never realize just how truly awful they are before God even if they see their need to be saved from sins. If God allowed new Christians to realize how great their sin is when they are first saved they would lock themselves in a room and cry for the rest of their lives. Instead, we realize the gulf between us and God more and more as God produces humility and shows us our need for Him. This all means that many Christians will get the impression after years of Christian growth that they are more sinful than the day they accepted Christ and here is where the simple world of heroes and villains will destroy Christians.

Many Christians come to the conclusion that when they started the Christian life they were heroes and now they are villains because they have realized how truly wicked are their hearts. Other Christians may realize they were villains or antiheroes upon conversion, but as they struggle with the same sins of years past they don't believe they are any less villainous than before. All of this produces the great plagues of Christian doubt and despair. We use our false premises with the reality of our sin to surmise we must not truly be Christians and/or God must be very angry with us, though ironically our heartbrokenness over our sins is the chief confirmation of true Christian faith. In reality the person who should doubt their salvation is the supposed Christian that thinks himself basically the good guy and is seldom reminded of the severity of even our smallest sins.

Let's change the mentality and embrace the antihero we are and the monster that lives within. Realizing we are more villain than hero and never could be the hero this side of eternity produces real Christian fruit. Embracing the monster inside us like the symbiote that taints Venom's mind shows us our constant need of God's grace and reminds us of God's great love in giving salvation to people as bad as us. When we abandon the oversimplifications and realize the monster will always be there we can better show others mercy and we will soon become far more focused upon God's glory than our feeble glory.

Christian brothers and sisters, look into the mirror of your souls today. When you see your horns and tumors don't ignore them or lose hope. Instead, I urge you to praise God for his mercy and ask for his help in fighting against the sin you understand more and more each day. Today if you think you already the good guy and don't know Christ as your savior, look at the character and standards of Jesus the only truly good man and compare your relative goodness to his perfection. When you see Christ's perfect goodness you must realize we all fall short of God's standards, so accept the villain that we all are. Next repent and trust in Christ to save you by taking the punishment that you deserve.

-Pastor Tony

Mission Moments

It's that time of year when we start to think about school starting. What! Summer is just getting underway. It feels that way, but summer is fast fleeting and school is within sight. Many children need help with school supplies, and Shepherd's Staff is here to help them, with our help. The need is for children from K to 5th Grade. If you want to donate items, please take them directly to Shepherd's Staff now.

We will also collect items for the Shepherd's Staff blessing closet during September. Please help fill our Mission Barrel for this ministry that helps so many. Items needed: powdered laundry detergent, dish detergent, deodorant, soap, toilet paper, toothpaste, disposal diapers (baby and adult sizes).

Women on Mission will start their Fall season on September 15. This group of women (which is open to all women of the church) meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am, at the church.

Mission Friends and **Preschool Choir** will be on September 16. Please note the date as it is later this year. Start time is 6:45 pm for choir, and 7:30 pm, for Mission Friends. These groups are for children 3 years - K.

The **New Life for Girls** Banquet is September 18, at 7:00 pm. Cost is \$20 per person. If you would like to go, let Mary know by September 6.

Looking ahead, to our ministry to Samaritan's Purse (shoe boxes). Now is the time to be collecting items. We will also be making bags for the men at the **Rescue Mission** and **New Life for Girls**.

Mary Reeb



FOOD
&
CLOTHING
NEEDED

Local Mission Outreach Opportunity

As part of our local mission outreach, we are excited to offer free clothing and food to families in need as part of our upcoming **Fall Harvest Festival**, October 10, 2015.

Beginning in August, we will be collecting gently used clothing, toys, games, toilet articles and canned/boxed foods (no items with expired dates, please).

All items may be placed in the Office Hallway Coat Room.

We are also in need of volunteers to help with this ministry, to sort and organize the donations. If you would like to help or have questions, contact Nancy Bickel at 410-891-2073 or Barbara Lambert at 410-751-9548.



Red Cross Blood Drive
Monday, September 21
1:30 - 7:00 PM

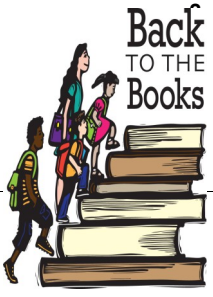

August

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 Lord's Supper 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Contemporary 12:30am Yth Ldr Mtg | 3 9:00am Youth to Six Flags 7:00pm Praise Team | 4 7:00pm Deacon's Meeting | 5 | 6 Noon Silver Sages' Luncheon (Bullocks) | 7 10:00am Women of Grace Prayer Ministry; Shepherd's Table 6:30pm Young Adult Life Group | 8 |
| 9 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Contemporary | 10 7:00pm Praise Team | 11 8:30am Silver Sages' Breakfast  | 12 9:00am Children's Choir Days 7:00pm Yth Bible Study | 13 9:00am Children's Choir Days  | 14 9:00am Children's Choir Days | 15 NOON Women of Grace Fellowship Event |
| 16 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Contemporary | 17 7:00pm Praise Team; Children's S.S. Teacher Meeting | 18 7:00pm Admin Team Meeting; Awana Ldr Mtg | 19 | 20 | 21 10:00am Women of Grace Prayer Ministry 6:30pm Young Married Couple's Life Group | 22 3:00pm Yth High School Boys Laser Tag (Red Zone) |
| 23 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Contemporary | 24 7:00pm Praise Team; Harvest Festival Meeting | 25 10:00am GROW | 26 | 27 10:00am Women of Grace Scripture Refreshment 7:00pm W.I.S.E. Meeting | 28 | 29 11:00am Church Picnic (Holbrook Hollow Farms)  |
| 30 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Contemporary | 31 7:00pm Praise Team |  | | | |  |



Couple's Marriage Bible Study
Friday Evenings at WBC
September and October 2015
(Led by Pastor Glen & Barbara Willet)

SEPTEMBER

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|---------------------------------|
| | | 1 7:00pm Deacon's Meeting | Back TO THE Books  | 3 Noon Silver Sages' Luncheon (Bullocks) | 4 10:00am Women of Grace Prayer Ministry 6:30pm Young Adult Life Group | 5 |
| 6 Lord's Supper 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School (*Promotion Sunday) 11:00am Contemporary Noon Youth Paint Ball | 7  LABOR Day Church Office Closed 7:00pm Praise Team | 8 8:30am Silver Sages' Breakfast | 6:30pm Youth | 10 |  Remembering 9/11 ***** | 12 |
| 13 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Contemporary 6:00pm Sanctuary Choir | 14 7:00pm Praise Team | 15 10:00am Women on Mission 7:00pm Admin Team Meeting | 16 6:00pm Children's Choir 6:30pm Youth 6:45pm AWANA; Preschool Choir 7:30pm Mission Friends | 17 | 18 10:00am Women of Grace Prayer Ministry 6:30pm Young Married Couple's Life Group | 19 |
| 20 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Contemporary 6:00pm Sanctuary Choir | 21 1:30pm Red Cross Blood Drive 7:00pm Praise Team | 22 10:00am GROW 7:00pm Women of Grace Bible Study (Rictor) | 23 6:00pm Children's Choir 6:30pm Youth 6:45pm AWANA; Preschool Choir 7:30pm Mission Friends | 24 7:00pm Women of Grace Bible Study (108) | 25 10:00am Shepherd's Table | 26 9:00am Missional Workshop |
| 27 8:30am Traditional 9:45am Sunday School 11:00am Contemporary 6:00pm Sanctuary Choir | 28 7:00pm Praise Team | 29 7:00pm Women of Grace Bible Study (Rictor); Ministry Team Meeting | 30 6:00pm Children's Choir 6:30pm Youth 6:45pm AWANA; Preschool Choir 7:30pm Mission Friends |  | | |

Youth Paint Ball

Cost: \$30

Sunday, September 6

4:00 pm

Everlasting Hope



Women of Grace
Spring WEEKEND RETREAT
April 1-3, 2016

WOMEN of all ages...start planning now to join us for our Weekend Retreat in **SPRING 2016**...Psalm 71:5 "For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O LORD, from my youth. " (ESV)

Join us for worship, fellowship and time with God and women of all ages in a beautiful setting close to home at Middle Creek Christian Conference Center in Fairfield PA

Any questions???? Contact.... Barbara Willet, Retreat Coordinator. 443-375-2757

Want to help plan and/or work behind the scenes?

Contact Barbara Willet, to see how you can share HOPE with others.

Save the Date— Save Your Funds \$\$\$

TOGETHER
TOGETHER
IN PRAYER SERVICE
IN PRAYER SERVICE



Sunday, August 2
7:00 PM
Multi-Purpose Room



New Members

by Ninette LeGates

We extend a warm welcome to the new members being introduced in this month's column, and thank God for the blessings of their fellowship and for the special contributions that He is leading them to make for His kingdom.

Before their recent move from Glen Burnie, **Jerry and Marilyn Bigley** attended *Christ Church* in Gambrills. Marilyn plans to retire in October. Currently she teaches special ed. math at Chesapeake High School in Anne Arundel County. Before his retirement, Jerry had his own barbershop and later worked as a water plant operator in Bowie. The Bigleys enjoy riding their motorcycle. Marilyn is a quilter, and Jerry enjoys woodworking. Their children's names are Cary, John, Tanya, and Cathy. They also have a granddaughter and step-grandson. Their pet cats are named Cheyenne and Candy.

Don Murphy, who was raised and confirmed in the Methodist church in upstate New York, followed the Lord in baptism on January 11. He is a government employee, and his interests are music and exercise. He and his wife, Stacy, have three children whose names are Ryan, Ashley, and Taylor. They have a dog named Zoey and a cat named Karma.



BRING YOUR FAMILY BACK TO
19TH CENTURY RURAL AMERICA

1st Annual Harvest Festival

October 10, 2015



FREE FOOD



GAMES



Family
FUN



September

Westminster Baptist Church
354 Crest Lane,
Westminster, Maryland 21157
Phone: 410-848-6330
E-mail: wbbaptist@comcast.net
WEB: www.westminster-baptistchurch.org

